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30TH STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

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March 13, 1978, Monday, Final Edition

SECTION: Style; B1

LENGTH: 1200 words

HEADLINE: A Who's Who Soft-Shoe Revue;
Ribbing, Jabbing and A Presidential Jitterbug

BYLINE: By Donnie Radcliffe By Donnie Radcliffe

BODY:

The tune was "Sweet Georgia Brown" but if nobody recognized the words, at least the dancers looked familiar. Appropriately, both were Georgians even if the name wasn't Brown.

Try Carter, Jimmy and Rosalynn, Saturday night at the 93rd annual Gridiron Club dinner.

They turned up in white tie, tails and sequins, jitterbugging on stage at the Capitol Hilton to become first presidential couple to perform as a team before the Gridiron, which started out in 1885 as a dining and drinking society of working newspapermen.

Nobody had been sure until almost the last minute the Carters would join the Gridiron's soft-shoe revue. They had been concerned that they might be the only dancers on stage, according to one source privy to the negotiations. Thus a contingency plan had been worked out, with several substitute dancers lined up from among the 500 guests.

But while no one was aware of it, the Carters slipped away from their places at the head table and went backstage. They went public as a Gridiron member impersonating Special Trade Representative Roberts S. Strauss started to sing:

"We've got hicks - now politics are no where around:

"Plain to me, they've claimed D. C. as their Georgia town.

"Two left feet they think are neat in their Georgia town.

"They stumble and then

"They do it again..."

Except that the Carters, who have been jitterbugging since the 1940s, didn't stumble. "They were terrific," said one Gridironer, "Great sports," said another.

And it's always a night where you have to be a good sport. The evening's skirts lampooned:

The Republican Party as an endangered species off on a "big-name" hunt to Panama to agenerate headlines,

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(c) 1978 The Washington Post, March 13, 1978

"No matter how the treaties may seem to go, sang a member impersonating GOP expedition leader Ronald Reagan, "we'll let the whole bloom - in country know they gave the damn canal away and they'll pay next election day."

The Democrats as "the country's one remaining collection of natural vaudevillians."

"Give 'em an act with lots of piety to cover any impropriety.

.A hooper sans necktie dubbed Hamilton Jordan. Spread on the old southern charm and it will dazzle 'em. It's bound her physical dimensions, bust out of all those staid conventions..."

Kansas Sen. Robert Dole, giving the response for the Republicans, was the clear winner for laughs, according to high - placed Gridiron leaks.

Having read about a forthcoming Whit House shake - up, Dole noted that Carter hadn't yet arrived, and asked, "could it mean...?"

He looked down the head table to where the real Hamilton Jordan was seated.

Strauss, point man for the Democrats, said the club had thought about asking President Carter to make the rebuttal speech for the Democrats but had turned to him instead. A self - styled adviser of Carter's Strauss said his latest had been how to solve the coal strike. His advice: Pardon Tony Boyle.

Jimmy Carter's own solution, he revealed when it came his turn to address the crowd, was to sell jets to both sides in the coal strike, miners and producers.

For 93 years we have been confusing our guests by turning out the lights and lecturing them in the dark," said Gridiron President Allan W. Crowley of The Daily Oklahoman and Times, adding that for the first

Carter stunned some in the crowd - "ohhhhhh," they reportedly murmured missed Dole's speech, he was familiar government ranked right up there with the Uniter Mine Workers' Arnold Miller, the president quipped.

Strauss had been a loyal supporter, Carter chided, ever since they had first met at the national convention. Strauss had joined his campaign, he continued, at a time when he was only Department translator to clarify his remarks.

But the ribbing and jabbing was in the tradition of the Gridiron: good - natured, bipartisan and all - pervasive

A few years ago, official Washington seemed to be losing interest in the annual dinner which had been a Washington institution since its beginning. The problem arose from its exclusion of women members. The first woman member, Helen Thomas, was sworn in in 1975, and Betty Ford, assisting, did a tango with the club's soft - shoe revue. Since that time, interest has rekindled and this year's crowd was a veritable the chief justice, cabinet officers, rowd was a veritable Who's Who of American's movers and shakers, with a head table that included the chief justice, cabinet officers, congressional leaders, several foreign ambassadors and members of Carter's own White House staff.

Time there would be an expert State Department translator to clarify his remarks.

There were some ovations (for Muriel Humphrey, the junior senator from Minnesota, among others); some hisses (for "Prince of Darkness" Robert Novak, one of five new Gridiron initiates) and some surprises (Hamilton Jordan in white tie and obviously enjoying himself despite earlier vows never to darken gridiron's door).

Long, in fact, loomed larger than life to at least one guest, who told how he had always waited for the day when a southerner would take control of the government. When he finally arrived in Washington, Jimmy Carter continued, he found that southerner had control but it wasn't he. It was Russell Long.

And Franklin D. Roosevelt was the first to agitate for black tie. "Your presidency will go down in history as the era when the President of the United States undertook to wear a black tie and dinner coat to a Gridiron Dinner - and got away with it," Roosevelt wrote the club's president, George R. Holmes, in 1936.

But Roosevelt provided one of the most memorable moments at a Gridiron show when he read blistering comments about the American press at one dinner. "There are city editors who do not know what a symphony is or a streptococcus...there are reporters by the thousands who could not pass the entrance examination for Harvard and Tuskegee, or even Yale. It is this vast and militant ignorance, this widespread and fathomless prejudice against interelligence that makes American journalism so pathetically feeble and vulgar, and so generally disreputable."

GRAPHIC: Picture 1, Jimmy Carter; Robert Dile, Rosalyna Carter; Illustration, illustration by John Heinly; Picture 2, Hamilton Jordan, Robert Strauss and Jody Powell

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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

TO: Ed McNally

FR: Bob Simon

5 pages

Copyright (c) 1988 The New York Times Company;
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LENGTH: 1176 words

DATELINE: WASHINGTON, March 27

President Reagan's Farewell appearance at the Gridiron Club dinner transformed the Washington press corps' annual tribal rite in white-tie-and-tails into an evening likely to be remembered for its sentimentality as much as for the pungency of its political one-liners.

Mr. Reagan has come to every dinner since his election, compiling an attendance record second only to Franklin Delano Roosevelt's. Unlike some of his predecessors, Mr. Reagan has actually appeared to enjoy the jokes made at his expense.

At 103d annual banquet Saturday night, Mrs. Reagan's rendition of "Thanks for the Memory" near the conclusion of the evening's entertainment caught the emotional pitch of the event and drew a standing ovation. Her appearance came as a long-planned surprise that had been one of Washington's worst-kept secrets.

Mrs. Reagan wore a bright red ball gown as she sang her solo on the stage of the Capital Hilton hotel. One verse referred to Donald T. Reagan, the former White House chief of staff, and Raisa Gorbachev, wife of the Soviet leader, both of whom are regarded as less than her favorites. Mrs. Reagan crooned: Thanks for the memory Of all the times we had, The happy and the sad; Looking back, Don Regan doesn't seem so bad. Thanks for the memory, The Soviet Mona Lisa, Sometimes known as Raisa, She said to me, 'Would you like to see My MasterCard and Visa? She concluded: Oh, how the time does fly; Ronny's loved these past eight years, And so, I confess, have I. Thank you, bye bye.

Mr. Reagan, sounding slightly hoarse, began his speech saying, "Before I refuse to take questions I have an opening statement." He praised his wife's performance as "absolutely wonderful," and said, "Raissa, top that!"

The club, with an active membership of 60 newspaper journalists, exists as one of Washington's more idiosyncratic nongovernmental organizations. After more than a century, it has achieved the status of a revered capital institution.

Guided by few written rules, the club is governed by an accretion of strictly observed customs from the ritual "Speech in the Dark" by the club's president that opens the show to the final singing of "Auld Lang Syne." The club's

only real purpose is the dinner at which club members and several hundred of their guests listen as some of the country's highest officials are satirized.

The club expressed its appreciation to the President with its own version of "Thanks for the Memory." One verse thanked Mr. Reagan for "Ollie and Bill Casey/ The diversions you forgot."

He defended himself against criticism of avoiding the press. "Well, you'd be surprised at the foreign leaders who've been calling me for advice," he said. "Who do they think has been giving Panama's President Delvalle those tips on hiding out?"

Mr. Reagan also commented on his wife's highly publicized influence within the Administration. "That pillow talk thing has gone too far," he said. "Just the other night I woke up to find half the Cabinet in bed with me. I wouldn't have minded, but Otis Bowen's feet were like ice," he said, referring to the Secretary of Health and Human Services. "Frank Carlucci kept stealing the covers."

Besides the Reagans, the dinner guests included Justices of the Supreme Court, governors, senators, representatives, mayors, Cabinet officers, several ambassadors and senior corporate executives.

Clowns and Politicians

Mr. Simpson, whose father was Governor of Wyoming, told a story that he said was one of his father's favorites. A rancher was driving down a highway when

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he was stopped by a highway patrolman for speeding. "Haven't you got a governor on that truck?" the patrolman asked. "Nope," replied the rancher. "That's manure you smell."

Mr. Cuomo, who decided not to seek the Democratic Presidential nomination this year, said he made up his mind late one night as he sat alone. The Devil appeared and told Mr. Cuomo he could be President if he would agree to first forfeit his soul. "So I said," joked Mr. Cuomo, "what's the catch?"

Mr. Cuomo also raised the topic of possible Presidential pardons for John M. Poindexter and Oliver L. North, the indicted former White House officials. He suggested, "Swap Poindexter and North for Noriega and a dictator to be named later."

During the club's show, a cast member portrayed Mr. Cuomo wearing a foam rubber suit in the shape of large pumpkin that was draped with a sash bearing the Italian national colors. To the tune of "Santa Lucia," the character kidded the Governor about his refusal to enter the Presidential race. "There is the Presidency," he sang. "Some people love it. This son of Italy rises above it." Lampooning Hart and Bakker other songs lampooned other former and current public figures. Cast members playing Gary Hart and Jim Bakker, the television evangelist, sang "To All the Girls I've Loved Before." Gov. Michael S. Dukakis was represented as a Greek dancer; Mr. Bush by a cast members singing a takeoff of Michael Jackson's song "Bad" and Senator Bob Dole as the tragic clown Pagliacci.

Mrs. Reagan's appearance was not her first. In 1982, she performed a self-deprecatory version of "Second Hand Rose" called "Second Hand Clothes." The song was regarded as helpful in softening her image as an aloof First Lady.

Still, it may have been Mr. Reagan who delivered the best parting line of the evening when he remarked on how he will be compared with future Presidential Gridiron guests, "You're really going to miss me if you have to sit through eight years of President Dukakis."

GRAPHIC: Photo of members of the Gridiron Club (NYT/Paul A. Souders)

ORGANIZATION: GRIDIRON CLUB

NAME: REAGAN, RONALD WILSON (PRES); REAGAN, RONALD WILSON (MRS); JOHNSTON, DAVID

TITLE: WASHINGTON TALK PAGE (NYT)

5TH STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

Copyright (c) 1987 The Washington Post

April 27, 1987, Monday, Final Edition

SECTION: FIRST SECTION; PAGE A2; LOU CANNON

LENGTH: 739 words

HEADLINE: The Truth in Reagan's Humor

BYLINE: LOU CANNON

BODY:

Over the years, Ronald Reagan's self-deprecating sense of humor has been a shield and saving grace in moments of political and personal crisis.

Last month, Reagan wowed Washington at the Gridiron Club dinner with a speech that poked fun at the Iran arms sales and his work habits. "It's true that hard work never killed anybody, but I figure why take the chance," Reagan said.

Last week, he tried again at the White House Correspondents Association dinner, referring to his forgetfulness about the arms deal by advising the group's incoming president to "write down what you did" on Aug. 8.

Reagan understands that humor works best when the comedian is the butt of his own joke. He once told me that this was the secret of Jack Benny's success, and Reagan has become adept at political application of this insight. He knows that a self-deprecating joke touching a vulnerable point can establish a common bond of humanity and soften a critical audience.

White House polls show that the public disbelieves Reagan's assertion that he knew nothing of the diversion of funds from Iran arms sales to the Nicaraguan contras. At the Gridiron dinner, the president quipped that the missing money was diverted to the Southern Methodist University football team.

Self-directed humor is a thoroughly American characteristic. It is also an art form, and Reagan's use of it is genuine and calculating. He has been telling such jokes since his radio days in Des Moines, and he polished his routines in Hollywood and in speeches on what he used to call the "mashed potato circuit."

Reagan's appearances before skeptical audiences may also have served the therapeutic purpose of forcing him to deal with the reality of his diminished credibility. He is comfortable when speaking out on the unpopular side of issues that matter to him, as demonstrated by his consistent support for the contras. He is willing to risk political defeats, as in his veto of the highway bill. But the president finds it painful to accept that millions of Americans who deeply trusted him no longer take him at his word.

Telling jokes, many of them self-written, about the scandal has become Reagan's way of letting us know that he understands that many Americans now see him in a different light. What the president is unable to admit in formal speeches, he can confront when faced with a performer's challenge of drawing laughs at his expense.

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When Reagan became a political force in the 1960s, many suspected that his best lines were the products of gag writers. We soon learned that Reagan, however much help he may have required on other matters, needed no assistance in composing one-liners.

My discovery came early in Reagan's California governorship, when his limousine was driven through hostile student demonstrators, one of whom thrust his face against the car and shouted, "We are the future." Reagan borrowed a piece of paper and wrote a note that he held up to the window. "I'll sell my bonds," it said.

The natural side of Reagan's humor was demonstrated to the world when he was shot in 1981 and joked on the operating table that he hoped that all of the doctors were Republicans.

Reagan's calculated humor also paid dividends, especially in the 1980 campaign, when he was trying to demonstrate that he was neither too old nor too dangerous to be president. His many cracks about his age and his famous "there you go again" retort while debating President Jimmy Carter were carefully rehearsed lines designed to appear as spontaneous flashes of wit.

Reagan depended on others to bring him up to speed on the substantive issues, but he often wrote the one-liners himself, sprinkling them throughout debates with Republican opponents and with Carter.

In the last five months, the strain on Reagan has sometimes shown through the script. One such moment came when he greeted members of the champion New York Giants football team at the White House. After referring to the team's supporters as "our fans," Reagan added, with a wistful smile, "Your fans, I should say. I don't have many fans anymore."

It was a bleak and realistic assessment by a politician who has long understood that in humor there is truth.

Reaganism of the Week: At the correspondents dinner Thursday, the president said he and House Speaker Jim Wright (D-Tex.) "agree that there are three things we must do to balance the trade deficit. We can't remember what they are."

TYPE: COLUMN

SUBJECT: UNITED STATES; PRESIDENT / CHIEF EXECUTIVE; WRITERS

NAME: RONALD REAGAN

ENHANCEMENT: HUMOR

6TH STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

Copyright (c) 1987 The Washington Post

April 1, 1987, Wednesday, Final Edition

SECTION: EDITORIAL; PAGE A23

LENGTH: 855 words

HEADLINE: The Night They All Laughed

BYLINE: David S. Broder

BODY:

This is the season for settling things. Monday night, television audiences watched as the NCAA final settled the supremacy of men's college basketball and the Academy Award ceremonies determined the best picture and best acting honors for the year. And last Saturday night, official Washington came as close as it ever does to settling scores with itself at the annual dinner of the Gridiron Club, a group of newspaper reporters doubling as (very) amateur performers. Settling scores is no small thing, for in the world of politics and policy-making, few issues are ever really closed. As former White House chief of staff Donald Rumsfeld has said, "The hardest thing to accomplish in Washington is to get a subject off the agenda. Nobody ever accepts an adverse decision as final; they just keep coming back." But a ritual has evolved in recent years for "settling" several important matters in a psychological sense that clearly colors the later substantive decisions. It happens at the Gridiron Dinner, where Washington reporters and their bosses -- editors and publishers -- share four hours of eating and entertainment with the people in government and politics we write about the other 364 days of the year.

The Gridiron Club has been around for 102 years. For the last 13 years (to make my bias clear), I have enjoyed being one of its reporter-members. But it is only in the last six years that those of us who dress up in silly costumes and perform in satirical skits have begun to recognize the serious function this annual dinner fulfills, as a tension-breaker and score-settler in the political life of this city. The reason for this change can be stated in two words: Ronald Reagan. As Gridiron president James McCartney of Knight-Ridder Newspapers said in welcoming the president to his seventh straight dinner last Saturday, "We think you understand what we're all about -- show biz . . . and that you know, as we do, that it is a precious thing that we can kid each other and have good fun together." Not all presidents have understood the value of a laugh. Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon and Jimmy Carter couldn't forget, even for a few hours, that they really despised the journalists in the room. The tension lent an uncomfortable edginess to their remarks and even the blindest of our songs. But Reagan grasped from the first that this was a made-to-order occasion for celebrating the healthiness of the critical relationship that inevitably exists between the press and the government -- and laughing away its ugly overtones of personal antagonism. He has captured it so well, in the graceful comments with which he has ended the last seven Gridiron dinners, that almost every other politician in town has got it straight. The key is the ability to laugh at oneself, and Saturday's dinner showed just how effective that technique can be.

House Speaker Jim Wright (D-Texas), who suffers from a reputation for self-righteousness, confessed that he and his party could be accused of inconsistency. "For six years," he said, "we went around saying Ronald

Reagan didn't know what was going on. And now, when he says the same thing about himself, we say he's lying." Vice President George Bush, whose supposed lack of backbone makes him the subject of continual ridicule, laughed off his greatest vulnerability by telling of a conversation he had with Reagan early in the administration. "Will you support my policies, whatever they are?" the president asked. "Oh, absolutely," Bush replied. "But my friends tell me you have strong convictions of your own."

Still, the master showman proved to be Reagan himself. That came as no surprise, but it was particularly welcome to see him in top form after months in which he had brought down a deluge of criticism on his head for the follies of the Iran policy and his painful procrastination in cleaning up the mess. On Saturday night, Reagan took on each of his supposed weaknesses -- his age, his memory, his distaste for hard work, his domination by his wife, his inattention to detail -- and laughed them away with a joke on himself. If anyone thought he was bent -- let alone broken -- by the troubles that have visited his administration, he had a message: "Remember the Flap when I said, 'We begin bombing in five minutes'? Remember when I fell asleep during my audience with the pope? Remember Bitburg? Boy, those were the good old days."

The wave of laughter and applause that swept the room was more than admiration for his grace and wit. It was everyone saying, "We remember too. And we're glad."

ENHANCEMENT: SOCIAL FUNCTION

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7TH STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

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March 30, 1987, Monday, Late City Final Edition

SECTION: Section A; Page 16, Column 5; National Desk

LENGTH: 937 words

HEADLINE: WASHINGTON TALK;
ROASTING REAGAN: GUESS WHO LAUGHED LAST

BYLINE: By JOYCE PURNICK

DATELINE: WASHINGTON, March 29

BODY:

He was, after all, the only real pro in the hall.

So it was no surprise that after listening to reporters roast him and his Administration over nearly four hours, after watching them mug and cavort their way through a respectful, if sometimes irreverent revue, Ronald Reagan took to the microphone for seven minutes Saturday night and stole the show.

The event was the Gridiron Club dinner, the annual command performance for Washington's powerful, would-be powerful and wish-they-were powerful. The idea is a one-night role reversal, a chance for the reporters, Government's professional observers, to take center stage, even if it is a makeshift one in the Capital Hilton.

But this time, the principal guest won the honors, taking refuge in self-deprecatory humor that touched on everything from his health to that great mess of his Administration, what has variously been called Iranseam, Irangate and Iranamok.

"With the Iran thing occupying everyone's attention, I was thinking," the President said to the formally attired audience of 600 plus; "do you remember when I said bombing would begin in five minutes? Remember when I fell asleep during my audience with the Pope? Remember Bitburg?" Dramatic pause. "Those were the good old days."

'Made For the President'

On and on he went in the same vein, doing what any savvy politician should do when in trouble, assertively take the defensive.

"This was made for the President," George McGovern, the 1972 Democratic Presidential candidate, said afterward, sort of shaking his head.

Vice President Bush, who also spoke, drew some head-shaking of his own; to put it kindly, he did not please his audience.

The President, with the help of his speechwriters, obviously chose to poke fun at himself. He did so at least as pointedly as his journalistic critics. And with a much better delivery.

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He talked about how his wife, Nancy, and his former chief of staff, Donald T. Regan, had tried to patch things up at a lunch for two - "and their food tasters." He joked about his new strategy of establishing "relations with moderates in the news media." And he revealed, in jest, that the missing money from the Iran-contra affair had gone to the Southern Methodist University football team.

When it came to the state of his health, the 76-year-old President left little to the imagination. "Since I came to the White House I got two hearing aids, a colon operation, skin cancer, a prostate operation and I was shot." He looked straight at his audience. "The damn thing is, I've never felt better in my life!"

The predominantly male crowd, an audience of reporters, publishers and their guests, roared.

Politics being an industry built on words more than substance, some even heralded those seven Presidential minutes as evidence of a Reagan resurgence. "He's not been himself about responding to things in the last five or six months," said David Gergen, Mr. Reagan's former director of communications, now editor of U.S. News & World Report. "This is the first time I've seen it in months."

The audience was not representative of the general public since only those invited by news organizations can come, and they tend to be insiders, creating a roomful of what the Gridiron president, James H. McCartney, a reporter with Knight-Ridder Inc., called an "incredible assemblage of privilege and power."

This year it was, as always, a varied crowd, ranging from members of Congress and the Supreme Court to an assortment of Washington's "high-placed political sources."

Maureen Reagan was there, and saw herself parodied in the show by Helen Thomas of United Press International singing "My heart belongs to Daddy." Also partaking of the five-course, three-wine meal were Gen. William Westmoreland, his lapel decorated with eight ribbons; the Voyager co-pilots Richard Rutan and Jeana Yeager, and two Republican Presidential aspirants, Alexander M. Haig Jr. and Representative Jack F. Kemp, who, as the spotlight hit him, yanked his glasses off.

The obvious hit of the reporters' part of the evening was a boisterous rendition of the Beach Boys' old hit recording, "Barbara Ann." The words Saturday night were "Arm Arm Arm, Arm Arm Iran."

Mr. Reagan laughed out loud at that one, though he seemed to miss a number of other lines. Mrs. Reagan laughed, too, and she also held onto a small smile as she was portrayed in one skit as the powerful leader of an exercise workout class.

Gridiron audiences are usually tough ones, and this year's was no exception. At after-show parties, it was generally agreed not only that Mr. Reagan's strategy worked but that the reporters were too gentle and that Mr. Bush failed. In fact, he was widely judged to have bombed.

L I T T L E ' S

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"This was his opportunity to knock them dead and he didn't," said Herb Klein, a former White House communications director in the Nixon Administration, now editor in chief of Copley Newspapers Inc.

Some of the Vice President's jokes drew winces. One was about how, after he and his wife, Barbara, read the stock market tables one night, he said to her, "Barbara, was it as good for you as it was for me?" The audience was not appreciative. Neither, it appeared, was Mrs. Bush, in full view up on the platform.

The evening's groaners notwithstanding, the banquet was judged a modest success, as it is most every year, maybe because its participants - politicians and those who report on what they do - have more in common than they generally admit.

As Mr. McCartney put it in his speech, "You understand, Mr. President, what we're all about. Show biz."

ORGANIZATION: GRIDIRON CLUB

NAME: PURNICK, JOYCE; REAGAN, RONALD WILSON (PRES)

TITLE: WASHINGTON TALK PAGE (NYT)

March 30, 1987, Monday, Final Edition

"Look at the cast of characters," McCartney continued. "Oliver North. The first lieutenant colonel in the history of the Marine Corps who believed that the chain of command started at the bottom. And Donald Regan. Just when we were starting to put our show together last December he described his job as White House chief of staff as comparable to a 'shovel brigade' cleaning up after a circus. You could say that Don Regan provided the inspiration, if not, indeed, the theme, for our show."

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And so the circus theme pervaded the evening, from the costume of ringmaster David Broder of The Washington Post to papier-mâché circus animals decorating the ballroom walls to the song "Be a Clown."

The facts just needed a little music.

To the tune of "Try to Remember," the impersonators of the Tower commission trio sang:

Try to remember

The time in September

When you said, yes,

Or was it golly?

Did you dissemble

The truth last December

With Ollie

Ollie, Ollie, Ollie ...

Did you forget it,

Or did Fawn Hall shred it,

Or maybe they hid it

In Lucky's collar. One of the evening's biggest hits was a spoof of Poindexter sung to the 1960s Beach Boys hit "Barbara Ann." The refrain went:

Arm, arm, arm, arm, arm Iran

Arm, arm, arm, arm, arm Iran. And some of the lyrics were:

The contras get the money

And Khashoggi gets the squeeze ...

Although it may seem zany

We'll send weapons to Khomeini

Arm Iran As traditions go, this particular spring rite of Washington has held onto its luster. And a scandal and a president who enjoys the stage only embellish its reputation. The vast availability of "original" material prompted the Gridiron cast to break with tradition and divide the evening's program into separate segments on domestic and foreign policy instead of two acts, one on Democrats and one on Republicans.

As guests milled around comparing the highlights, the reviews came in quickly and enthusiastically. "I thought it was an excellent evening. Everybody was a

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star. The president rose to the punches ... It was truly a well-staged production," offered retired general William Westmoreland.

"I shouldn't comment upon it," said Justice Antonin Scalia in typical judicial manner. But atypically, Scalia stayed well into the after-parties. He said, "I was talking to Senator Moynihan and I said, 'I can't imagine it happening in any other country ... One of the virtues of the American republic is that we don't take ourselves too seriously.'" As he left, British Ambassador Antony Acland concurred: "It was great fun, very unique, I am not sure we could have anything like this in Britain."

Attending the dinner were: Secretary of State George Shultz, Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger, Chief Justice William Rehnquist, governors William Donald Schaefer of Maryland and Richard Celeste of Ohio, presidential contenders Jack Kemp and Alexander Haig, former contender George McGovern, almost contender Patrick Buchanan, Maureen Reagan, former Virginia governor Charles Robb, former secretary of state William Rogers, Rep. Bob Michel, Sens. Strom Thurmond and Sam Nunn, former U.N. ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick, retired judge John J. Sirica, television correspondents Peter Jennings, Tom Brokaw and Diane Sawyer, gossip columnist Liz Smith, advice columnists Ann Landers and Abigail Van Buren, and Lyn Nofziger, Clark Clifford, Benjamin Hooks, Vernon Jordan and Roger Stevens.

They dined on lobster, duckling strudel, medallions of veal with crabmeat and something called "meringue circus tent."

In another tradition, giving the Democrats and Republicans equal time, Vice President George Bush and House Speaker Jim Wright delivered short, joke-filled speeches.

The President's Best The post-Gridiron poll indicated the president was in top form, according to many observers, who characterized his responses as "fluent, at ease, good tempered."

First, there was McCartney's barb to answer. The Gridiron president had said, "I've seen it reported that you're just a president of image and no substance. But I understand that you often take home serious reports and documents to read at night. And I'm told that you often pick up one of those serious reports or documents to study -- during the commercials."

Reagan rose to the occasion. "You made a slight mistake. I read the papers while the news is on. I watch the commercials."

The president's best lines, according to several guests, were:

"I'm afraid the scandal has become even more complicated regarding the diversion of funds. Just today I learned who got the money from that Swiss bank account -- the SMU football team."

"As if the independent counsel, a special review board and two congressional committees weren't bad enough, there was my trip to Bethesda. I tell you, one more probe and I've had it."

"Nancy and Don at one point tried to patch things up. They met privately over lunch. Just the two of them and their food tasters."

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"I'm glad to see Howard [Baker] here tonight. He's a well-liked, nice, low-key kind of guy. But let me tell you, he can be a dragon when he gets his hackles up. Course, Howard won't be running now, and the campaigns are starting already. I heard one presidential candidate say that what this country needed was a president for the '90s. I was set to run again. I thought he said a president in his nineties."

"It's true hard work never killed anybody, but I figure why take the chance."

The Bush Routine As Jody Powell, a former White House press secretary, observed after the dinner: "Everyone hit on Bush."

"Elephants dance while George Bush walks the high wire," said the announcer in describing the attractions for the Gridiron "circus." Another line went: "Here is Vice President Bush's campaign manager. He's teaching George to swallow anything."

Since the office of vice president is everyday grist for humorists, Bush decided to dispense some advice to the Gridiron's vice president, columnist Carl Rowan. First of all, he counseled, a vice president has to establish his own independence. Said Bush, "The president took me aside and said, 'George, I want to know if you will support me on every stand I take?' I said, 'Of course, Mr. President.' 'But your friends tell me you have strong opinions of your own. Is that true?' I said, 'Of course it's true, Mr. President. I have opinions of my own -- strong opinions -- but I don't always agree with them.'"

Later, at one post-dinner party, Rowan jokingly said Bush's focus on him had started a "pre-inauguration impeachment drive." Rowan is due to be the Gridiron president next year.

Most of Bush's remarks, said several attendees, fell far below Reagan's and Wright's on the chuckle counter. Addressing Attorney General Edwin Meese, who wasn't there, Bush said, that to Meese the three Rs are "reading, 'riting and right in that jar, please."

The Wright Stuff House Speaker Jim Wright doesn't mind the ribbing about his signature eyebrows, which stand like blond propellers above his glasses. "I like to think of them as dramatic," he said, stroking them.

But he strongly objected to reports that his joke about Fawn Hall and Sen. Barbara Mikulski (D-Md.) was in bad taste.

For the record, the joke went: "It's good to see this White House is at last getting some real class. I'm not talking about Howard Baker, I'm talking about Fawn Hall. They offered her \$500,000 to let them use her picture for a centerfold and she turned them down. I really admire her for that and that ain't no joke. Of course she's not the only one. Barbara Mikulski turned them down too."

Because of a flap over a remark by Sen. Pete Domenici (R-N.M.) about Mikulski at the equally "off-the-record" Alfalfa Club dinner last month, several people thought the joke was at least ill timed if not objectionable. The reaction at the dinner was described by one attendee as "some laughter, some clapping, some hissing, some boos."

MARKET ANALYSIS

Wright said yesterday he didn't hear any boos and was extremely annoyed at the interpretation. "I might guess that somebody might try to spread that. I didn't say anything out of line. It is very disappointing to me that someone would seek to say something malicious about something that was warm and well intentioned. It was very warmly received. Anyone who felt that was reading something into it that isn't there."

Most Gridiron members and their guests knew better than to tarry in the lobby. But Lynda Johnson Robb, who waited for her husband, Charles Robb, met with approval from one spectator.

"Now that's tacky, ridiculous" was the verdict on a Gridiron-goer who had unsuccessfully mixed evening wear with rainwear: white tie and tails and scruffy brown rain hat.

Ann Landers, in a black-beaded gown, milled around the lobby for a while, working the arrival crowd. When Jim and Sarah Brady appeared, she greeted them, gave Jim Brady a kiss, and struck up a conversation with Sarah Brady about gun control legislation.

"You have helped," Sarah Brady assured the advice columnist.

After Landers greeted Secretary of State George Shultz, she stepped behind the crowd, to a less populated part of the lobby. Moments later, someone came up to her and said.

"No," Landers said.

"Beverly?" The woman repeated again, as if there were still hope.

"No." Off went the hotel guest, disappointed.

Lobby Applause Meter As the illustrious guests arrived, the crowd registered its recognition and approval with rounds of applause.

Shultz, who was limping slightly but moving right along with his wall of security guards, received loud applause. Right on his heels was Weinberger, also enthusiastically greeted and smiling back at the crowd.

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Then Haig. Then Sam Donaldson. Then Pat Moynihan. And that gave the audience, trained in political celebrity spotting by C-Span, a run for their money.

Headed toward the second-floor ballroom, Moynihan pivoted toward the crowd, acknowledging their applause.

Of course, the crowd was really waiting to get a look at President and Mrs. Reagan. But they came in through a secure entrance, not subject to public scrutiny. The closest the crowd got was to stare at a blue curtain on the second floor landing, while the sounds of the Marine Band playing "Hail to the Chief" filtered down to the lobby.

The Barbed Another year, another Gridiron, and still more Sam Donaldson jokes.

The president said of the ABC correspondent: "I have to admit we considered making one final shipment to Iran, but no one could figure out how to get Sam Donaldson in a crate."

The vice president said of Donaldson: "He was toilet-trained at gun point."

Yesterday Donaldson said, "If I can help Bush be funny I will have accomplished something near impossible." He added he was not offended at being the object of their jokes and even considered it "an honor."

Another target of the humor was Edmund Muskie, former secretary of state and member of the Tower commission. Before the show, he seemed resigned to the fate, saying, "Maybe I am already a caricature without any effort." A Muskie character found its way into the evening's skits, dressed in a beige morning suit, a member of the singing Tower Commission Trio. Crooning out the Iranized lyrics to "Try to Remember," the Muskie impersonator lapsed into a bout of tears.

The reference was to an incident 15 years ago, when Muskie broke down three times defending his wife over an unflattering newspaper article, wounding his own presidential campaign.

"I've gotten used to it," Muskie said later, at a post-roast reception. "It wasn't a joke at the time. It made a difference then and it hurt. But you can't hang on to hurts. It did make a difference at the time -- maybe I would have won."

But the bright side to that episode, especially looking at it these days, is, as Muskie observed, "Think of all the problems I've been saved."

Not left out of target range was Jack Kemp. On stage Jack Germond of the Baltimore Evening Sun was speaking to columnist Robert Novak, "People tell me, Novak, that you're running Kemp's campaign." Replied Novak, "Not true. He's messing it up all by himself." Later, a song said, "Jack Kemp played ball, scrambled his brain."

In one skit that looked at the 1988 lineup as a beauty pageant, to the tune of "The Way You Look Tonight," a Haig impersonator wore a red-and-white-striped outfit adorned with military gear. "Al Haig's so pretty, 'specially when he's mad," sang the chorus.

Haig said he enjoyed the tease. "It was an improvement on the real thing. Much better than I would have been. They used much shorter sentences," said Haig.

As expected, Shultz's tiger tattoo didn't escape Gridiron notice. To the tune of "Honey Bun," a would-be "Shultz" dressed in a beige body suit festooned with tattoo, including a strategically located tiger, sang:

Pounds of Fur

That's our little Tiger Bun.

Maureen Reagan, said UPI's Helen Thomas, laughed at the venerable reporter's parody of the first daughter in a baby blue pinafore, singing "My Heart Belongs to Daddy."

Thomas as "Maureen" sang:

Each day I scoff at Fahrerkopf

And this '88 handicapping

My Dad will choose the one who can't lose

Just as soon as he's done napping. Nancy Reagan, several people said, laughed heartily.

When it was the First lady's turn to be spotlighted in a "Nancy Reagan's Workout Tape," set to the beat of a rap song, observers said the audience was so busy watching her reaction that they missed parts of the skit and it didn't go over as well as it might have. Some Lines:

It happened in '80

I got a grip

Dispatched John Sears

With a gentle flip . . .

Pull in your tummy

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I dispatched Al Haig

With barely a shove

One, two

With an itzy little finger

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I did the same

To Lyn Nofziger ...

And with Don Regan

I was pushed to the max

We even had to do

The jumping jacks

In easing him out

And finally fired

I worked up a sweat

Really perspired! The Missing Barbed Gary Hart, the Democratic front-runner for the 1988 presidential bid, was verbally roughed up for his views and statements. Said George Bush, "There's Gary Hart. Some say he's had no experience in foreign affairs. Not true. Just yesterday he had breakfast at the International House of Pancakes."

In the skit, Hart was satirized with:

I'm wild again, beguiled again

A middle-aged flowering child again

Bewitched, boring and bewild'ring, that's me

They say I am a cryptogram

But this time I'll know just how old I am

Four years older than the last time, I'll be. And not to be left out, Ollie North was feted by the chorus to the tune of "Hello, Dolly."

Hello, Ollie

Well, hello Ollie

It's so nice to have you here where you belong

You're looking swell, Ollie. "North" responded:

I'm no Nero, I'm a hero,

I did nothing wrong.

I found these nice mullahs

Paying top dullahs,

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Read a line from Reagan's

Scripture now and then.

Piece of cake, fellas

Just for Freedom's sake, fellas,

I would love to do it all again And the chorus sang:

Oh, no, Ollie,

Oh, no, no, Ollie,

That is not exactly what we had in mind.

So take the stand, Ollie

Tell the story of your glory

Cov'ring your behind. The Last Word Proving himself to be a strong believer of Tip O'Neill's dictum that "all politics is local," humorist Art Buchwald said the best joke of the evening was this one: "Poor Mayor Barry. Washington lost its bid to host the Democratic National Convention because Mayor Barry couldn't guarantee to have the snow cleared by August."

GRAPHIC: ILLUSTRATION, RICHARD THOMPSON FOR TWP

TYPE: FEATURE, PROFILE

ORGANIZATION: GRIDIRON CLUB

NAME: RONALD REAGAN; NANCY REAGAN; DONALD REGAN; OLIVER NORTH

ENHANCEMENT: SOCIALFUNCTION QUOTE

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March 27, 1987, Friday, Final Edition

SECTION: STYLE; PAGE D1

LENGTH: 2574 words

HEADLINE: Washington's Hams on Wry;
The Ghostwriters Who Rev Up The Capital Humor Mill

BYLINE: Elizabeth Kastor, Washington Post Staff Writer

BODY:

The air is thick these days with jokes waiting to be. Ollie North. Jim and Tammy Faye Bakker. Fawn Hall. The sultan of Brunei. Rarely have the people on the podiums had such great material, which is convenient since Washington is now in its silly season.

The ability to pull off a joke in front of 1,000 people eating overcooked chicken may be as important to a politician as the ability to understand the budget -- this is the kind of Washington fact no one disputes. Between the Alfalfa Club's dinner in early February and the Gridiron Club's dinner tomorrow night come the days of wine and roasts, with their steady stream of jokes columnist Mark Shields describes as "not even inside the Beltway, but inside Western Avenue."

And don't imagine the jokes spring full blown from the heads of those up there on the stage. Behind them the Washington humor machine chugs away, and men in claustrophobic rooms craft one-liners they hope will prove politicians are as funny as real people.

"You know what they said about John Glenn when he did the Gridiron," says Mark Russell. "It took more people to get him up on stage than it did to get him to the moon."

The Men Behind the Curtain

"As I understand it, we supplied Iran with our weapons and Iraq with our intelligence. Iran got the better deal." -- Bob Orben

Most people, if left alone for several days, would be hard pressed to come up with something resembling even a bad joke. This is why God invented ghostwriters.

"If I became a performer, I would not give my writers credit -- I would pay them a pot of money, but I would not give them credit," says Bob Orben, who makes a pot of money selling his jokes to people who give him no credit. After years of writing for Red Skelton and Jack Paar, Orben joined Gerald Ford's speech-writing staff and wrote jokes for the chief of state to mangle. Now Orben is the dean of Washington humor ghosts. In addition to writing for the not-to-be-named politicians and others, he publishes Orben's Current Comedy, a twice-monthly newsletter that promises aid to "speakers, emcees, toastmasters, businessmen, educators, clergymen, public officials, community leaders, club presidents, communicators." And desperate members of Congress.

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The publication runs the occasional essay on subjects like "assessing your audience" and "Why Humor?" and offers possible responses to "a needling introduction," advice on how to react to the sound of breaking glass ("I think Ed Meese just broke his specimen jar") and pages of jokes.

Issue 585, Vol. 30, No. 14, March 5, 1987: "Husbands don't listen to their wives and they should. All last year Nancy Reagan told Ronnie to clean out the basement and he didn't."

"The problem with a humor writer living in Washington is that you become mesmerized by the thought that politics and the Washington Redskins is all the country is interested in," says Orben. But most of Washington's ghosts -- people like Frank Mankiewicz, Mark Shields, Richard Drayne, Mark Russell, Art Buchwald -- write almost entirely for Washington audiences. The White House basement and football are just fine with them.

The First Rule of Official Humor

The ideal Washington joke would be about tomorrow's news.

"It cannot be too topical," says Mark Shields. "If you make references to things that happened between the salad and the soup, it works. There is no one dining out today on great Jim Watt stories. Donald Regan stories are gone."

Who now remembers throw weights? Case closed.

Humor, says Rep. Pat Schroeder (D-Colo.), who is known for her way with the quip, is essential to prevent audiences from adopting the MEGO look (My Eyes Glaze Over, for the uninitiated). Outside Washington, maybe. But here, getting the joke is like knowing what all the acronyms stand for -- you've arrived in the world of the insiders.

"There's a very clubby feeling to those events, especially the Gridiron and the Alfalfa," says Landon Parvin, a former White House speech writer who now consults and wrote Don Regan's '86 Gridiron speech and Ronald Reagan's recent television address on Iran. "A clubby feeling and a feeling of power."

That Was No Woman, That Was a Comedian

"I don't know if you've heard about the religious conversion at the White House. It's Don Regan. He's leaving to be a cardinal. For most of us it is a relief to know we will now only have to kiss his ring." -- Rep. Lynn Martin, January 1986

When Lynn Martin (R-Ill.) told her Don Regan joke at last year's Salute to Congress dinner, not only was she way ahead of the Regan-joke curve, she was breaking a Washington stereotype that is broken over and over but never seems to disappear. She, a woman, was funny. If the professional comedy world has been slow to accept many female comedians, the amateur one has been even slower.

"I think women aren't invited to these things a lot," says Schroeder. "When you do hear about one appearing, everyone goes, 'Oh my god, they can do it too!' It still is basically a man's town. The line between humor and a dagger is kind of thin, and it's a little tough for women to do the same kind of humor. If I did Bob Dole humor, people would think I had blood on my teeth. People would

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think it was brutal. Women's humor has to be a bit more gentle."

"Women have had to be very serious to get to this place," says Martin. "It wasn't a ho-ho-ho to run for Congress."

And not only the best performers, but the best writers are presumed to be men.

"It's partly the old bonding," says Mankiewicz, "but it's also cultural. Washington has traditionally been one of the most sexist parts of our society. It's one big locker room."

The Joke That Died

I'm blessed with the talent of ... whipping the electorate to a frenzy. Just like the singer Tom Jones, women often throw their panties at me when I speak. It happened again just yesterday. I just don't know what got into Senator Mikulski." -- Sen. Pete Domenici, Alfalfa Club, February 1987

"I sort of feel responsible for that because the senator felt uncomfortable about it from the beginning," says Landon Parvin. "I checked it out with lots of Democrats and they said, 'It's fine. She's got a great sense of humor.' The Barbara Mikulski panty joke was a joke that several of us urged Senator Domenici to use because we told him it would bring down the house. It did bring down the house, but it also brought down the wrath of Mikulski. The only person it really went wrong with was her -- the audience laughed and laughed."

"It was just sort of a funny image. It wouldn't work with Senator Kassebaum -- the visual isn't as funny as short, feisty Barbara Mikulski. I think she was something of a poor sport on that one. I think what it means is the idea of the Alfalfa as a place, an event, where you can do more, is dead. It was an all-men's club, after all. Fritz Hollings told a joke about an erection -- that didn't get out. It was really about Reagan's foreign policy. That went too far."

One Big Don't

"With all the caucuses and groups, we're not nearly as ethnic in our humor," says Shields. "There are no Pedro, Pat or Manny stories being told. You can make fun of your own group, but you can't make fun of anybody else's. The one group you can make fun of is WASPs. They're fair game. You can do 'Quiche is their idea of soul food.' You can do 'They tailgated during the War of 1812.' There is no Episcopalian Anti-Defamation League. I've checked."

The Barrymores of Washington Humor

The Kennedy family. Humor has become something of an obsession in the Kennedy clan, which has spent two decades living up to John's reputation for wit.

"A Kennedy speech is always a great event because the Kennedys ask maybe a hundred people for help," says Frank Mankiewicz, who has written jokes for 19 of the last 20 Gridiron dinners, and for his share of Kennedys. "Half the city? They ask half the country. People get called off the stage in Las Vegas for ideas."

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The Definition of an Iranian Moderate, You Ask? "What's an Iranian moderate?"

A graduate student who's run out of ammunition." -- Mark Shields, Dec. 9

"What is the definition of a moderate Iranian? A moderate Iranian is one who has run out of ammunition." -- Art Buchwald, Dec. 9

"What the hell is an Iranian moderate? Is it someone who takes hostages but doesn't eat them?" -- Mark Russell, Jan. 22

Could Shields, Russell and Buchwald be reading from the same script? Could they be one person? Have you ever seen all of them in the same room together?

"When you've got a subject," insists Shields, "you're going to get the same jokes."

So this was a case of simultaneous spontaneous generation? Yes, Shields says, this time, but he also admits to having done his share of stealing. "Jokes have a copyright of about 12 hours."

"You will go to these funny events and you will see people with a pad of paper and a pen, writing. If you did that in a show in Las Vegas," says Orben, "some big person with a twisted nose would come up to you and remove you from the room."

Stealing, of course, cuts down on the joke-writing fees. It can also deflect. A couple of years ago, when George Bush seemed to attend a funeral for a foreign head of state every other week, any number of speakers described the motto of the vice president's office as "You die, we fly." After several months of this, Bush simply appropriated the joke and told it to an appreciative audience, proving that he was a Great Guy Who Could Laugh at Himself.

Don Regan, Funny Man

If anyone doubts the importance of humor in this city during the age of Reagan, he need only consider the case of Donald Regan. One writer who helped Regan with his Gridiron speech last year remembers testing the chief of staff's sense of humor with a rather off-color joke about Donald Manes, the public official at the center of the Queens, N.Y., political scandal who killed himself. "I've got to tell that to the old man!" Regan laughed.

During Regan's last days at the White House, it was reported he made a point of greeting the president with a joke every morning. Regan associates generally believed that Thomas Dawson, Regan's executive assistant, had responsibility for providing the daily joke, but Dawson, who will soon take a job as assistant to the private Don Regan, finds such reports infuriating.

"That is a complete fabrication!" he says. "People were saying that there were jokes at the 9 o'clock Oval Office meeting, and I just don't know if that's true. In two years at the White House I gave Mr. Regan one joke, and I don't know if he gave it to the president. I provided one joke -- actually I don't even remember it. It was like someone had heard a joke and I tracked it down. I have a sense of humor, but I never provided jokes."

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Humor in the Era of Oliver North

Political satirists around the country -- long used to lamenting the lack of interest in political humor -- sense a thaw. Irancon may have made skepticism fashionable again, and Reagan's troubles removed the aura that surrounded him for years.

But that's outside Washington. Here, even the relatively sedate Gridiron has been reined in. Several lines in this year's show have been censored by club members, and a joke about Maureen Reagan was reportedly cut because Nancy Reagan, who is scheduled to attend, would not be pleased.

"I think you can't attack the president -- any president," says Mankiewicz. "You can make fun of him, you can say, 'The president's been losing a lot of sleep these afternoons,' that kind of thing. But I don't think you can go too far. I think the closer you get into the concentric rings of the White House, the less you want to hack away at confidence. There's been a lot of writing about whether the president's lost it -- I don't think you can get into that with humor."

The Gridiron as Icon

"There they are -- See No Evil, Hear No Evil, and Evil." -- Robert Dole, about a photograph of former presidents Ford, Carter and Nixon

Every year when the Gridiron comes around, the journalists who belong to the club and the politicians they invite to the white-tie dinner start talking about how the evening's skits and humorous speeches show just how free America is -- the press can make jokes at the expense of political leaders, irreverence is encouraged.

Irreverence, maybe. True comedy? Well ...

"I quite agree with Malcolm Muggeridge that all good humor is in bad taste," says Arthur Dudden, who is head of the department of history at Bryn Mawr College and has been writing about American humor for more than 30 years. "By its nature humor is anarchistic," Muggeridge added, "and it implies, when it does not state, criticism of existing institutions, beliefs and functionaries."

"Here they have a public opinion to shape," says Dudden. "A comedian doesn't have that. A comedian has to destroy, gently or not."

At the Gridiron and other large, public events, the jokes are hardly concerned with destruction. Mark Russell describes the Gridiron speeches as "biting political compliments," and as a one-time comedian and local pundit says, "When a joke fails in Washington, you have to make a public apology."

Along with a few other outsiders, New York free-lance writer Jamie Malanowski was called on in 1984 to help write the script for a roast of Gary Hart. By the time the Washington regulars had edited the draft (no Reagan jokes -- too mean; no age or name-change jokes -- too touchy), little of Malanowski's roast was left.

"The best humor is adversarial," says Malanowski, who now writes for the New York humor magazine Spy. "It's done by people who are not in the process. In

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Washington, the humor that exists is not of that biting political, adversarial kind. It's more poking fun at yourself. The object of the joke is inclusive -- the object is to include everyone in the room."

So, as the rest of the country laughs along with David Letterman's ironies, the old one-liners continue to spew out of the Washington humor machine.

"There is a whole new generation of humor, the whole Letterman-quick-cut-'Miami Vice' style," says Mankiewicz, and adds that the new generation has yet to arrive on the official circuit.

"I'll tell you one reason I think that's true -- we don't have cable," he says. "You have great comedians on cable all the time, plus cable has MTV and that sets a style of quick shots and jumps and a whole style of color and dress. That will come to Washington one day. I would bet you political banquets, roasts, fundraisers in Los Angeles are a lot different today than they were 10 years ago, but in Washington they're pretty much the same. You go to a Gridiron dinner this year, and it could be the '70s or the '60s."

The Last Rule of Washington Humor

Self-deprecating is always best.

Nobody likes a smug politician. Jimmy Carter is roundly criticized by the people who keep track of these things for aiming most of his best lines at the press ("I'm not going to say anything terribly important tonight, so you can all put away your crayons") rather than himself. Ronald Reagan, who even in his times of troubles remains the king of Washington humor, knows about self-deprecating. With volumes of jokes about his age, he beats any opponent, and the audience's imagination, to the punch every time. And even in these times of trouble, he will take to the microphone again at the Gridiron.

But with Oliver North jokes? No word yet.

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HEADLINE: Grilled on the Gridiron;
It Was Baker v. Ferraro, But Reagan Got The Rough Ride

BYLINE: By Lois Romano, Washington Post Staff Writer

KEYWORD: GRID

BODY:

From the overcrowded and smoke-filled Capital Hilton suites early yesterday morning, word flowed that Treasury Secretary James Baker bested Geraldine Ferraro at the Gridiron Club's annual off-the-record meltdown.

Word also flowed faster than the expensive scotch that two of President Reagan's punch lines did not sit well with some of the guests, in fact eliciting a chorus of groans followed by a deadening silence.

In speaking of the farm issue, dinner guests said later, Reagan quipped, "I think we should keep the grain and export the farmers."

The joke fell flatter than a bad wheat crop.

"I didn't think it was funny, and I didn't laugh," said Sen. Larry Pressler (R-S.D.), who represents a key farm state, after the dinner.

Nebraska Democratic Gov. Robert Kerrey also appeared unhappy with the remark, according to those sitting near him.

A few minutes later, guests reported, Reagan talked about "rumors" that he was seeing a therapist "three times a week," advising the audience not to worry.

Then he explained to the crowd that he just had a "problem" with pushing buttons.

That one fell flat too, the guests said later.

The president's remarks became the prime topic of post-party chatter. Fresh in people's minds, perhaps, was Reagan's controversial joke about bombing the Russians, made last August before one of his weekly radio addresses.

Yesterday the White House declined to comment, and would not reveal who wrote the president's remarks.

But for Baker, the evening couldn't have been a better forum for his comic debut as more than 600 of the nation's powers and power lovers sandwiched into the Capital Hilton's ballroom to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the media club that has become synonymous with satire and exclusivity.

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The Gridiron Club dinner is an annual singeing of Washington officialdom by the journalists who cover it. The white-tie, six-course, six-hour event is also the organization's sole reason for being. And lest the powers that be remain defenseless, the club always invites a representative from each political party to face off.

Baker stole the show. Some of his best, from the usual reliable sources who were inside:

* "Speaking of people 'low down on the list,' the vice president is here tonight. But we should all be proud of George Bush. George did so well at the first Soviet funeral that they keep calling him back. In fact, his motto is 'You die -- I fly.' "

* "There are a lot of well-known people at the head table tonight. The president is here, the chief justice is here, the secretary of state is here . . . [looks under the table and returns to mikel John Riggins is here?"]

* "I really want to congratulate Gerry Ferraro. She's the only ex-politician in town not working for Bob Gray."

* "The president called me very excited the other night when he got back from Canada. He'd heard about the bank holiday in Ohio. He wanted to know if we all got the day off."

Ferraro, too, got good reviews -- although her two joke writers couldn't top Baker's eight. Joking about her controversial Diet Pepsi endorsement, she quipped, "To tell you the truth, I really wanted to endorse diet Perrier, but the Perrier people said George Bush or nobody."

Some other moments to remember:

* White House deputy chief of staff Michael Deaver sat stone-faced during five cutting references, scattered throughout the night, to his BMW acquisition.

* Soviet Ambassador Anatoliy Dobrynin did not show up, leaving his chair next to Ferraro empty.

* "I got some good news from Geneva," Reagan told his audience. " 'Nancy, your watch is ready.' " And then, after describing the tedium of his job, the president said that to break the monotony, "every few days, I call CBS and ask for Jesse Helms."

* The club's skit about military procurement brought down the house when a gaggle of journalists showed up on stage in cone-head costumes with gold-glittered toilet seats hanging from their necks. To the tune of "I Found a Million Dollar Baby in a Five-and-Ten-Cent Store," they sang:

We buy our toilet seats at Tif-ny's

We drive Mercedes by the score,

They found a million-dollar hammer

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In a five-and-ten cent store.

* John Zaccaro and Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor sat eyeball to eyeball, engaging in animated conversation all evening.

* Retired general William C. Westmoreland got more applause than Walter Cronkite.

* One crisis of the night for guests was whether to eat the silver "paper" that covered the cold consomme'. It was edible, but it nonetheless caused some confusion.

It should also be noted that the menu was changed from hot soup to cold soup on Thursday when, according to a Hilton spokesman, the hotel was notified that the president wanted to be back at the White House by midnight. Having the consomme' on the table shortened the program a full 20 minutes.

* Actor Robert Duvall was on hand for his third Gridiron dinner. His favorite, he said, was the one he attended 13 years ago when Sen. Barry Goldwater (R-Ariz.) faced off with Hubert Humphrey.

Over the past century, the 60-member club of longtime Washington journalists has lampooned every president, developing a sophisticated routine of skits, songs and jokes aimed at tweaking the establishment. This year the club performed a history of songs from the past 100 dinners, like the one teasing William Howard Taft for his large appetite:

Sound the good old dinner horn, we'll sing another song

About the trip that Taft once made when with digestion strong,

He ate his share of everything that they would bring along,

As he went eating through Georgia.

The working press is never invited to the dinner, and the editors, reporters and publishers who are guests are expected not to report on it. Still, "off the record" has come to have no value at this dinner. Everything comes out eventually.

Though a merry time is had by all, critics of the dinner use it to spotlight the oftentimes incestuous relationship between the media and its sources.

Saturday night, they dined on trout and lamb and boasted a guest list that included President and Mrs. Reagan, Vice President and Mrs. Bush, Secretary of State George Shultz, Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger, Chief Justice Warren Burger and four associate justices, Chrysler Chairman Lee Iacocca, the Rev. Jesse Jackson, feminist Betty Friedan, Olympic Gold Medal winner Edwin Moses, Mayor Marion Barry, Sen. Gary Hart (D-Colo.) and Rep. Jack Kemp (R-N.Y.).

In introducing some of the guests, emcee Lucien Warren of the Frederick News-Post started off the night sniping. Take these examples:

On Lee Iacocca: "General Motors and Ford Motor Company are worried about the new seat belt safety rules. But Chrysler doesn't have to worry about it. They

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already have their own air bag."

On White House counsel Fred Fielding: "The ethical arbitrator of the White House, who learned everything he knows from the Nixon White House. He never met a man he would indict."

To respond to the Gridiron's roasting, Ferraro made her first major Washington appearance since the November election, and Baker made his first speech since leaving the White House to become treasury secretary.

Some of Ferraro's lines, penned by ghostwriters Frank Mankiewicz, an executive vice president at Gray and Co., and Dick Drayne, a CBS vice president:

* "It appears that over the next five years there will be nearly 20 votes on 'Star Wars' in the House. Twenty votes! Can you imagine? That's 40 different positions for Les Aspin to take.

* "I see the president has relented on emergency relief to the farmers. He's opened a special line of credit for them to be drawn on any Ohio savings and loan."

For his remarks, Baker commissioned top Republican joke writers including Don Penny, Vic Gold and Dick Moore.

By all accounts Baker's largest laugh-getter was the following joke:

"I had a terrible dream last night. I dreamed the three most powerful Americans -- the president, the speaker of the House and the chairman of the Federal Reserve -- suddenly passed away. All three appeared in St. Peter's waiting room.

"A voice came over the intercom telling the president to go to Room One. He went inside and found himself with a huge gorilla. The voice then said, 'Ronald Reagan, you have sinned, and you must spend eternity with this gorilla.'

"The voice over the intercom then sent Tip O'Neill to Room Two, where the speaker found a mad dog. 'Mr. Speaker,' the voice on the intercom said, 'you have sinned and must spend eternity with this mad dog.'

"Then the voice sent Paul Volcker to Room Three. He went in, and to his surprise he found himself with Bo Derek. Then the voice came over the intercom and said, 'Bo Derek, you have sinned . . . ' "

The crowd went nuts.

Said Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-N.Y.) after the dinner: "Mr. Baker may have been funnier, but Mrs. Ferraro was much more moving. They were all genuinely happy to see her."

"I think she was gutsy to get up there," said Vermont's Democratic Gov. Madeleine Kunin.

"Well, I think Baker was better," said New Jersey Gov. Thomas Kean. "But then again, I'm a Republican."

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The Gridiron members also performed songs for Baker and Ferraro, whereby journalists sang in the first person, as if they were Baker and Ferraro.

Ferraro's song, performed by UPI's Helen Thomas, went like this:

Now that I've got payola,

Pushing Pepsi-Cola,

I'm full of beans,

I'm Gerry from Queens.

The chorus of Baker's song, to the tune of "When I'm Not Near the Girl I Love," was:

First with Ford and then the preppie

I ignited Reagan fear

When I'm not near the pol I love

I love the pol I'm near.

Over the past four years, the president and Nancy Reagan have twice surprised their audiences at the Gridiron. Two years ago Reagan danced out on stage at the end of a conga line, clad in a huge sombrero and flashy serape, and sang his own version of "Man ana." Three years ago, Nancy Reagan brought the house down when she turned up wearing pantaloons and sang "Second-Hand Rose." This year the White House backed away from any spectacular performance by the Reagans, according to a club official.

In the end, Baker turned serious in saluting the Gridiron on its centennial.

"Members of the Gridiron, we've been through a lot of campaigns together," he said. "With bad motels, bad food, no food, late nights and early morning baggage calls. We've also had our share of mutual misunderstandings and irritations. I'd like to think that when we disagreed, we disagreed agreeably.

"We should all treasure the fact that we live in country where public figures and free press have for over a century been able to get together and laugh, both with and at each other."

The applause was thunderous, and the crowd filed out into the wet, rainy night.

GRAPHIC: Picture 1, Armand Hammer. Picture 2, Frank Fahrenkopf. Picture 3, Commerce Secretary Malcolm Baldrige being escorted into the Gridiron dinner. Picture 4, Robert Duvall. Picture 5, Lee Iacocca at the Gridiron dinner. Picture 6, President and Mrs. Reagan are greeted by Gridiron president John Krole of the Milwaukee Journal and Capitol Hilton general manager Kevin Deverich. AP

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HEADLINE: ROASTED!

The Gridiron's Raucous Ribbing of One & All

BYLINE: By Phil McCombs

KEYWORD: GRID

BODY:

LIDDY DOLE let 'em have it with both barrels at the annual Gridiron Dinner the other night. "Bob Strauss, you devil," she said to the Democratic Party insider. "You look so good this evening . . . If I were just 40 years older!"

Then the Republican transportation chief turned on Gary Hart, seated at the end of the dais. "The president doesn't worry about Gary Hart," she said. "He told me he's got saddles older than Gary, and they've held better ideas."

As for Ronald Reagan, who sat grinning next to her: "One thing about our candidate. He may be old, but we know exactly how old."

The white-tie crowd of 600 political, journalistic and business big shots loved it. They dined Saturday night at the Capital Hilton on quail, filet mignon, cactus pear sorbet and one another's reputations, all washed down with the usual three wines. They roared with laughter at Dole and Strauss, chosen to represent their parties, and at skits acted by members of the exclusive club whose active membership is limited to 60 longtime Washington journalists.

Strauss hit hard, too: "Elizabeth Dole tells me that being married to Bob Dole she has found to be a real religious experience . . . [Pause] . . . A living hell.

" . . . By the way, I'm tired of hearing how old the president is. After all, he's 25 years younger than the Statue of Liberty and in a lot better shape." Strauss said Nancy Reagan, who sat nearby smiling, arranged to get Judge William P. Clark and Ed Meese out of the White House to stop the bickering that was "causing the president many sleepless afternoons."

Meese, the embattled attorney general-designate, and Democratic presidential hopeful Jesse L. Jackson ended up next to each other on the dais after Illinois Gov. James R. Thompson, who was to have been between them, dropped out at the last minute.

"They never said a word to one another, and it seemed like their chairs were inching farther and farther apart all the time," said a guest.

Strauss said he and Meese were recently in a hotel washroom and Strauss tipped the attendant for both of them. "Imagine my surprise when, two weeks later, I got appointed deputy inspector of the EPA in Albuquerque."

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Sen. Howard M. Metzenbaum (D-Ohio), Meese's chief critic on the Judiciary Committee, was introduced, although he sat at a table and not on the dais.

Jackson left early, before the skits and speeches began. President Reagan, in remarks closing the four-hour roast, said he wasn't going to make any cracks about the Democratic hopeful because, "I may need him to get me out of China."

Reagan drew one of his biggest laughs with, "I'm not going to worry about the deficit. It's big enough to take care of itself."

Walter Mondale, who was campaigning in New York and didn't make the dinner, got off relatively easy, although Dole quipped: "It's the first time ever a Hart has threatened to replace a pacemaker." Former Democratic hopefuls John Glenn and George McGovern were on the dais.

In the skits, journalists dressed as cavemen (Democrats) and spacemen (Republicans) spoofed the pols, crooning songs like "Younger than Hartpence am I" and:

Our troops sit offshore and they're yearning once more

For Grenada . . .

My Pentagon guys want to see Latin skies--

Just a swift travelogue to Managua.

Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger, who was seated on the dais, reportedly grinned at that, and the Marine Corps Band played. Quipped Strauss: "I guess everyone's seen Cap Weinberger's new bumper sticker: 'WEINBERGER FOR PRESIDENT. LET'S GET IT OVER WITH.'"

Hart reportedly laughed when a dancer on stage, to the flashing disco lights, imitated a Michael Jackson dance while singing to the tune of "Beat it":

I am the FU-ture and the FU-ture is Hart . . .

I KNEW that I'd win, and with JUST my toothy grin.

Tip O'Neill wasn't there, but they sang a song for him anyway:

Yesterday

All our troubles we could spend away Then we'd pass a little tax to pay.

Oh, how I long for yesterday.

Suddenly

Life's not half the fun it used to be.

Reagan's shadow's hanging over me.

Oh, how I yearn for Franklin D.

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It was a wacky free-for-all, a Punch and Judy show in which powerful people let down their hair. The dinner has been held for 99 years, has gained a momentum of its own, and is off the record. Working reporters assigned to write about it were not allowed in, and the top editors, executives and reporters of major news organizations who are invited are expected not to take notes or report on it. Information for this article was gathered before and after the event, but not during it.

The club was started in 1885 during the first Cleveland administration, a time when there was plenty of yellow journalism and reporters were not always held in high esteem. It became somewhat of a goodwill dinner, although in 1907 President Teddy Roosevelt disrupted it by getting into a loud shouting match with a senator. In recent times, club members have been criticized for being too cozy with officials they cover.

This year, working reporters were allowed to watch a Friday rehearsal of the journalists' skits. It seemed strange--despite her very funny performance--to see Marjorie Hunter of The New York Times, dressed in futuristic sequined robes and belting out a fake hymn ("What a friend we have in Reagan/ Strong for church but never there!"). And strange to see Haynes Johnson, of this paper, shouting and flouncing around the stage in a caveman outfit.

But then, life is strange.

Last year Reagan himself, wearing a huge sombrero and serape, came out on stage at the end of a conga line and sang a self-parody, "Man ana."

This year's dinner was the first in some years at which the president or first lady didn't perform. Betty Ford danced on stage, Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter jitterbugged, and Nancy Reagan revamped an overly upper-crust image two years ago by getting up and making fun of herself.

But this year, club members decided against allowing the president or Democratic candidates to perform.

"It was an election year, and we didn't want to give either side a particular advantage," said club secretary Lucian Warren of the Frederick News-Post. He said there were indications that "The Reagans would have loved it . . . We were tempted. I wanted to have the other presidential candidates quizzing Gary Hart on the stage and show Roger Mudd how to do it."

As it turned out, Hart and Mudd, the NBC man who razed him so fiercely in a recent interview, were introduced together. One observer said Hart sat down quickly while Mudd kept taking the applause and "wouldn't sit down." Finally he did.

The president did manage to sneak in a little staging. Dole was winding up her speech with, "If you think the push for prayer in schools was something, wait until they try to introduce education," when Reagan started making slashing motions across his throat--the stage signal for her to stop.

"Elizabeth," he said, "you stole six of my lines, and now you're eating into my time."

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She turned and glowered at him. "Mr. President, I paid for this microphone!"

It got a big laugh--just as her opening greeting had: "Senator Dole . . . Mr. President . . ."

When it was his turn, Reagan described the dinner as "a most elegant lynching" and recalled how hurt he had been not to have been invited to the first one 99 years ago. He proceeded to tell how security was getting so tight around the White House that "I can't even get out to go to church."

In his speech, Reagan said he and Soviet leader Konstantin Chernenko ought to get along well because they have a lot in common--neither one trusts anyone under 70.

When he's talking on the hot line with the Soviets, he said, he has to tell them that it's not really static on the line but, "It's Charlie Wick clearing his throat."

When talking with Wick on the phone, he quipped, it's difficult to hang up. You say good-bye, but then you have to wait for Wick to say, "Cut!" Wick wasn't at the dinner.

Despite the nonpartisan ideals of the club leadership, and manful efforts by Strauss, the Republicans seemed to have the advantage Saturday night. The president spoke last by tradition, and the head table seemed dominated by President and Mrs. Reagan, Vice President and Mrs. Bush, the secretaries of State and Defense, several other cabinet members, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and Mrs. Burger, several other Supreme Court justices, Sen. Paul Laxalt (R-Nev.) and a number of top White House aides, including James Baker, Michael Deaver and Larry Speakes.

Also on the dais were pollster George Gallup, Gridiron Club president Jack W. Germond of the Baltimore Evening Sun, civil rights leader Benjamin L. Hooks and Redskins player Joe Jacoby.

Besides Strauss, Metzenbaum and the presidential candidates, Democrats in the audience included Clark Clifford, Charles Manatt, Virginia Gov. Charles Robb and Zbigniew Brzezinski. Ambassadors included Canada's Allan E. Gotlieb and his wife Sondra and British Ambassador Oliver Wright. Soviet Ambassador Anatoliy Dobrynin canceled at the last minute, giving no reason, and Lebanese Ambassador Abdallah Bouhabib was suddenly called to make a trip home and had to cancel. Television news heavies included Tom Brokaw and Daniel Schorr, and among the businessmen was Chrysler Chairman Lee Iacocca.

The hotel was crawling with security men. The president and vice president slipped in through a side entrance, but others entered through the hotel lobby where a crowd of onlookers gathered. Watchful Secret Service agents preceded Hart, but security seemed much tighter for Jackson. An agent with his hand inside a large shoulder bag that apparently contained a weapon too large to hide under his coat preceded him, scanning the balcony with fierce eyes and breaking into a run up the stairs.

At the dinner, Strauss got off to a fast start in his speech with a jab at Reagan. "So what if the program is running a little late, Mr. President. You and me are two guys who aren't going to get up for church tomorrow. Mr.

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President, you're the only person I know who's probably spoken to more preachers than he's listened to."

Strauss also had words for his fellow Democrats. "As for Hart being something new, I don't get it," he said. "Gary's had more birthdays than Averell Harriman.

"Now some say I was late in endorsing Mondale. I'm beginning to think I wasn't late enough."

The skits with their witty lyrics, in which the club members made fun of the polls by impersonating them, brought plenty of laughs. A few samples:

Singers impersonating Rep. Lindy Boggs, Rep. Geraldine Ferraro, San Francisco Mayor Dianne Feinstein and Kentucky Gov. Martha Layne Collins to the tune of, "I Enjoy Being a Girl."

When you want a sure-thing ticket

That will set Democrats awhirl

And curb women's urge to picket,

We suggest choosing a girl!

A Mondale impersonator, to the tune of "Sweet Georgia Brown," sang:

Shut my mouth, Ah love the South,

Ah'm sweet Georgia Fritz.

Alabama broke my whammy,

Sweet Georgia Fritz.

Catfish fry me, pecan pie me,

Sweet Georgia Fritz!

A Jackson impersonator, to the tune of "That Old Black Magic":

That old white magic has you in its spell,

That old white magic Reagan weaves so well.

He prays at breakfast and he prays at school,

He's annexed Heaven as a campaign tool.

(At the song's end, "Jackson" puts on a yarmulke and dances off stage according to the script.)

A Strauss impersonator, to the tune of the country song:

Oh Lord, it's hard to be humble,

THE GRIDIRON DINNER
(UNLIKE OTHER DRAFTS, THESE ARE THE REALLY FUNNY JOKES)

The Grape Jokes:

As a life member of the NRA, you know how I feel:
Guns don't kill. Grapes do.

Besides, if we outlaw all the grapes, only the outlaws will have grapes.

And think of all the Southerners who'll have grape racks in the back windows of their pick-up trucks.

Isn't it amazing that the grape inspectors found just two poisoned grapes out of hundreds of thousands of tons of them? I think we should put the grape inspectors on drug detail, since our drug agents are having such a hard time. We could give them grape-sniffing dogs ... Arm them with assault grapes ...

I see you didn't think that last joke was very funny. It's alright. I bet Pete Rose you wouldn't laugh.

The Mayor Barry jokes:

Somebody's got to tell Mayor Barry that Superfund isn't his entertainment account. And that the "supercollider" isn't his limosine.

I think it's wonderful that the Mayor likes our minimum wage proposal. And isn't it great that he qualifies for that training wage?

You know, I didn't realize how bad the crime in D.C. was until the other day, when I got on board my helicopter, Marine One. I asked the pilot where I should sit. He said, "Behind the gunner, sir."

Barbara went out to walk the dog one night last week. Pretty dangerous, you might think. But it was okay. Before she left, she said, "Cover me."

I know there's been some talk around town about bringing in the National Guard to deal with the crime problem in D.C. Well, I can say with certainty that Dan Quayle says if called, he'll serve. In fact, he's been ready to serve for the last 15 years.

I believe that action is needed in dealing with this problem. So I went last week to meet with Mayor Barry. But when I got to his office, he was gone. Apparently, the police had tipped him off that I was coming.

Current movies:

Barbara and I invited some friends over the other night to see a movie. It was the biography of John Sununu. You may have heard of it ... it's called "The Last Emperor." We liked it because it was a short subject.

Have you heard about that new sequel to the movie "Rain Man"? It's about a senior White House official who travels across the country with a member of the press corps, talking on background the entire way. It's called "Dar-Man."

((Quayle - Accidental Tourist?))

Self-deprecating:

People say I'm inarticulate and that I twist the language. Well, like, that's -- you know -- I just don't think that's, well I'm not inartic - no way. Hey, just get that outta here!

Others say I lack political courage. This is simply not true. I'm the one who went to those Amish people and told them to just say no ... I'm the one who went back to Yale to fight against illiteracy ... I'm the one who sent Manuel Lujan to American Samoa ...

GRANDIRON CLUB

Head Table Guests, *Sat. April 1, 1989*

<u>Host</u>	<u>Name</u>
Club	Alma Brown, Washington, D.C.
Club	The Vice President of the United States
Club	Ronald Brown, Washington, D.C.
Club	Mrs. Wright
Club	The President of the United States
Club	Mrs. Bush
Club	Mrs. Quayle
Club	The Speaker
Cooper	William Webster, Director, Central Intelligence Agency
Cooper	Benjamin Hooks, Baltimore, Maryland
Cooper	John Marsh, Secretary of the Army
Fichenberg	Justice O'Connor
Geyelin	The Ambassador to the United Nations
Hall	Gerald L. Baliles, Governor of Virginia
Hunt	Richard G. Darman, Washington, D.C.
Irwin	The Secretary of Commerce
J. Nelson	The Secretary of Health and Human Services
J. Perry	Gen. Alfred M. Gray, Jr., USMC
J. Perry	Alan Greenspan, Chairman, Federal Reserve Board
Knap	The Attorney General
L-E Nelson	The Secretary of State
L-E Nelson	The Secretary of Defense
Leubsdorf	Fred McClure, Washington, D.C.
Lewis	Robert H. Michel, Representative from Illinois
McCartney	Adm. William J. Crowe, Jr., Chairman, Joint Chiefs of
McCartney	Gen. Brent Scowcroft, Washington, D.C.
Novak	Thomas S. Foley, Representative from Washington
O'Rourke	Patricia C. O'Rourke, Chevy Chase, Maryland
O'Rourke	Joseph Pulitzer, Jr., St. Louis Post-Dispatch
O'Rourke	Emily Pulitzer, St. Louis Post-Dispatch

Head Table Guests

O'Rourke	John Sununu, Washington, D.C.
O'Rourke	Lawrence M. O'Rourke, St. Louis Post-Dispatch
R. Ryan	Justice White
R. Ryan	William Bennett, Drug Czar
Reed	Carla Hills, Washington, D.C.
Rennert	Justice Kennedy
Ridder	The Ambassador of Sweden
Ringle	Han Xu, Ambassador of China
Rowan	Justice Brennan
Sperling	The Secretary of the Treasury
terHorst	Yuri Dubinin, Ambassador of the U.S.S.R.
Thomas	Marlin Fitzwater, Washington, D.C.
Thomas	John Simpson, Director, Secret Service
Thomasson	William Sessions, Director, Federal Bureau of Investig
Watson	The Secretary of Veterans Affairs

March 23, 1989

MORE GRIDIRON JOKES

I may have gone too far with opening the White House to members of Congress. As Barbara and I were climbing into bed last night, there was Bob Byrd serenading us with his violin.

And Newt Gingrich was reading us a bedtime story entitled, "Chinese War Tactics of the 14th Century."

A lot of people ask me if I think Gorbachev is going to remain in power. So I called and asked him. He said, "Things aren't so bad. At least I don't have Newt Gingrich after me."

March 16, 1989

TO: ED McNALLY
FROM: Bob Simon
RE: Gridiron

Enclosed are some articles on recent gridirons. I thought of a few jokes myself:

- o I intend to bring a higher ethical tone to government. So I'm going to demand -- right now, tonight -- full disclosure from [Jim Wright or someone like him]: Who wrote your jokes tonight?
- o I hear rumors on the Hill that Jim Wright is going to hire a personal ethics advisor. But he's having a hard time convincing Donald Trump to work on government wages.
- o It's a real privilege having Jack Kemp in my Cabinet. Jack asked me to make him Secretary of Defense. But I got him to change his mind. Told him only if he started getting his hair cut by the Marine Corps.
- o Some of my advisors urged me to take some shots at Sam Nunn tonight, but I said, "I'm sorry, I'm just not going to do it." Sam's still too dull to be worth mentioning.
- o All sorts of Americans are responding to my call for a kinder, gentler nation. Roone Arledge did his part by taking Sam Donaldson out of the White House for me.
- o Sam prefers to call it a "medical leave." His doctors diagnosed gradual hearing loss -- excessive exposure to helicopter noise.

Yeah, I know. Needs work. I'll keep at it.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

March 20, 1989

TO: ED McNALLY
FROM: Bob Simon
SUBJECT: Gridiron

More jokes. Introductory one-liners:

They asked me to announce that the winner of the door prize tonight will receive a free savings-and-loan.

Last time I saw this many well-dressed people was at a coming-out party in Iowa.

Georgette Mosbacher called me last week to ask what to wear to the Gridiron and I told her it was white tie. She said, "It's white tie? I know I'm new to the Washington social scene, but I don't see what's so formal about a waffle dinner."

Use this one after whatever you do on Sam Nunn:

Since about half the Senate is here tonight, I'd like to take this opportunity to announce my nominee for Assistant Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs: Arnold Schwarzenegger.

I think this might be a good closing:

I'm going to do something I haven't done before. I'd like to tell you about a conversation I had with President Reagan last week. I said, "Ron, being president is a lot tougher than I thought. You always made it look so easy. What was your secret?"

He said, "Well, maybe you should try taking a nap in the afternoon." I said, "I don't see how that will help." He replied, "Well, all I know is that every time I took a nap, the Navy would shoot down two more Libyan planes and everyone in America felt better!"

Now it can be told -- off the record. Do you want to know the very first time I saw a thousand points of light? (waving arms for effect) Des Moines, 1987. I was making a speech to a charity group and accidentally slugged myself in the head.

(re. Millie and six pups) It's tough being President. One week I get kicked out of my bedroom because Millie has pups. The next week we get letters from NOW because we put Millie on the mommy track. (or) got a angry complaint from Richard Viguerie -- he was really steaming -- something about an unwed mother on public welfare.

Try to help a girl in trouble and look what happens. I get congratulations from pro-lifers and complaints from Planned Parenthood.

People keep spreading rumors about who the father is. I say it's time we left John Tower alone.

President Reagan used helicopters to drown out questions. Now, dogs!

I notice that you're enjoying the food and DRINK this evening. Did I see Paul Weyrich taking notes?

I saw Paul Weyrich the other day. I said "I don't hold it against you for getting me into deep doo-doo." Paul said, "watch your language, Mr. President." (or) "Mr. President, I am very disturbed. I heard you have a close relationship with a pregnant female other than your wife."

It's easy to be misinterpreted in this town. The other day a reporter asked me if I had any bitter memories of the Tower nomination. I said "none." (Nunn)

(if a joke gets no response) I haven't dropped one like that since 1944 over Chichi Jima.

I am pleased to join you on Pearl Harbor Day. Seriously, remember to mail your tax returns by midnight tonight.

(I'm accused of elitism.) There's absolutely no truth to that crazy story about champagne in the radiator of my limousine. That's ridiculous. Just a little Perrier water, that's all.

But I admit that I was the first President to throw an alligator shirt across the Potomac.

(People talk about all the states I claim as residence) It was a bit unsettling to see the FBI report.....George Herbert Walker Bush, 63 years old...of no fixed address.

I hope you noticed that I did not DRIFT over to this microphone -- there is no drifting in this administration. I was telling that to Bar at lunch as I was spreading a little MALAISE on my sandwich.

I want a kinder, gentler nation. I'm serious. Anybody who stands in my way will be severely punished. (or) get the death penalty.

DRAFT

HOME COMPUTER VERSION

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THE GRIDIRON CLUB

Thank you, Larry.
Your kind words are appreciated,
But entirely unnecessary.
It's nice just to be invited out to
~~For something other than an overseas funeral.~~

still get excited

By the way,

Next year,

Who do I speak to

To get an earlier spot in the show? *Even the Academy Awards show isn't this long!*

Not that I haven't enjoyed every minute of it,
But, I think I'm up for re-election.

Its just that...

Well, you know me.

I'm not one to be kept waiting in the wings.

I do have to keep my own comments brief tonight.

I promised to help with the dishes.

That's all right.

~~I used to cleaning up other people's messes.~~

Getting ready for my remarks tonight, I checked the history books.
~~Of course,~~ it was 200 years ago today

That the battleship Maine was sunk

When the Germans bombed Pearl Harbor...

Wait a minute.

I may have that date wrong.

I guess anyone who's heard me speak

Knows why Barbara has devoted her life

To promoting literacy.

You see, as President,

I was looking forward to getting all sorts of honorary degrees.

Well, I just got a call from Andover and Yale.

They want theirs back.

(Just call me the "Education President".)

I'm trying to improve.

I hired a new speech coach.

You may have heard of him.

Dr. Elmer Fudd?

I've listened closely to the jokes tonight.

And, boy am I a good sport.

Some presidential honeymoon.

There hasn't been a honeymoon like this since *Mike* *Robin*
Tyson/Givens.

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DRAFT

I really don't need this job.
My son owns a Major League baseball team.

I'll never forget my father's words:
"George, you may be President one day,
But hold on to that first baseman's glove".

But, I figure I'll stick with politics.
Baseball is a game of skill.

My family's always been very supportive.
George Will predicted
That if I got elected,
The sound you'd be hearing from the Oval Office
Would be "the ~~whining~~ arf of a lap dog".
And now, Millie goes and proves him right.

Betrayed by my own dog.
How do I explain to Gorbachev
That the Leader of the Free World
Got kicked out of bed
By a pregnant springer spaniel?

I can handle criticism.
I do regret that my Houston friends took such a pounding.
So for now, ^{Texans}
I'm going to spare them.
And I'm going to spare Washington.
Read my lips:
No new Texans.

Gorbachev told me he was surprised
That I'd actually invite people to read my lips.
Apparently, when I was the CIA chief,
That was the KGB's job.

My staff has come in for its share of criticism.
I hear the jokes.
"How many White House aides does it take to screw in a lightbulb?
None.
I've ordered them to keep me in the dark."

~~But, that's not true.~~
My staff is ~~very efficient.~~ *is still adjusting to my spontaneous style.*
~~Sometimes too efficient.~~ *I think the advance are overcompensating.*
Before dinner the other night
I said to Barbara.
"How about a little Chinese?"
Next thing I know,
I'm shaking hands with Deng Xiaoping.

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DRAFT

3(3(Ax

The key is knowing your aides.
For instance, my aide, Fred McClure.
He worked for Ed Meese, John Tower, and Frank Lorenzo.
When I go to the track,
I ask Fred's advice
And bet on the other horses.

But, I don't think we're off to such a slow start.
I've been busy writing notes
To all of those kids whose letters'
President Reagan read on TV.
And then there were the handwritten thank yous
To each citizen who voted for me...
By the way,
Does the hiring freeze apply to sub-cabinet appointments?

Even Barbara thinks I'm too cautious.
She says I should take the rear-view mirror
Off my stationary bicycle.

But, the way I see it:
If we start replacing the Reagan appointments
With our own people,
How are we going to blame problems on our predecessors?

Well, since the Senate Leadership is here,
I might as well announce another appointment.
Assistant Secretary for Congressional Liaison.
He's tough on defense. *of Defense*
He's a strong supporter.
He's Arnold Schwarzenegger.
You can have a hearing *if you want*
But, I'd hate to be the one to vote against him.

I'm learning, though.
I realize that for Secretary of Defense
Congress wants someone who understands foreign affairs.
Not someone rumored to have had them.

It's easy to be misinterpreted in this town.
Bill Bennett announced he'd stopped smoking.
Next day, the papers called him a quitter.

A reporter asked me
If there were any hard feelings
Over the Tower hearings.
I said: "None". (Nunn)

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But, I enjoy sparring with the press.
Some of you say that our agenda's constantly shifting,
That our people are divided,
That you can't follow what's going on.
Give me a break.
This is coming from the same people
Who appear on the McLaughlin Group.

I would like to have a "kinder, gentler" relationship.
And I think we can do it.
Especially since Sam Donaldson left. *the White House*.

I hear Diane Sawyer is teaming with Sam on a new show.
(Mary Poppins Meets Mr. Spock.) *What are they going to call it: Bambi vs. Godzilla*
That's like mating a French Poodle with a Pit Bull.

And, I know my pit bulls.
I've worked with Lee Atwater.

Lee's ^asmart. guy.
He's the first person in history
To go through Howard University
In just three days.

He knows how to recruit, too..
He's been to bars all across America
Telling everybody I was calling for
A thousand pints of lite.

But, the best thing about Lee:
He's an innovative conservative.
He wants Russians to stop jamming VOA,
And Republicans to start jamming R&B.

Did you see him during Inauguration Week?

The sunglasses.

The loud music.

The dancing.

The sweat.

Now, I know what he meant

When he said he wanted to lead
"The Party".

I think we should all bow our heads now,
And give thanks
That Lee never learned to play the accordion.

DRAFT

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(4)

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Well, I hope I've been at least mildly entertaining.
I'm sensitive about that
Because, believe it or not,
Some people say I'm boring.

You wouldn't think this would be a problem
For a man who told Idaho Republicans
He had sex with Ronald Reagan.

You wouldn't think this would be a problem
For a man who made Poloroids of Congressman
In the Lincoln Bedroom.

DRAFT

HUMPTY DUMPTY to HUNGER

which would not bear raillery was suspicious; and a jest which would not bear a serious examination was certainly false wit. [Anthony Ashley Cooper, Third Earl of Shaftesbury: *Characteristicks* V]

1 Raillery is a way of speaking in favor of one's wit at the expense of one's better nature. [Montesquieu: *Pensées Diverses*]

raillery = kidding, ribbing, and other forms of sadism thinly disguised as humor

2 Every man has, some time in his life, an ambition to be a wag. [Samuel Johnson: in *Mme. d'Arblay's Diary* V]
wag = a merry fellow, the life of the party

In its meaning of a humorist, wag is an abbreviation of *waghalter*—that is, one who will end up being hanged or wagging a halter in his death struggles. It seems originally to have been applied to mischievous little boys as a term of endearment and then to older drolls, especially such as kept a youthful impudence.

3 The humorous thief who drank a pot of beer at the gallows blew off the foam because he had heard it was unhealthy. [Emerson: *Society and Solitude*, "Old Age"]

4 And since, I never dare to write
As funny as I can.

[O. W. Holmes: *The Height of the Ridiculous*]

5 Everything human is pathetic. The secret source of Humor itself is not joy but sorrow. There is no humor in heaven. [Mark Twain: *Pudd'nhead Wilson's New Calendar*]

6 Nothing spoils a romance so much as a sense of humour in the woman. [Oscar Wilde: *A Woman of No Importance* I]

7 If a person desires to be a humorist it is necessary that the people around him shall be at least as wise as he is, otherwise his humor will not be comprehended. [James Stephens: *The Demi-Gods* XXVII]

8 There are men so philosophical that they can see humor in their own toothaches. But there has never lived a man so philosophical that he could see the toothache in his own humor. [H. L. Mencken: *Chrestomathy* 618]

9 Humor is a serious thing. I like to think of it as one of our greatest and earliest national resources which must be preserved at all costs. [James Thurber, on CBS-TV, March 4, 1956]

10 Humor is emotional chaos remembered in tranquillity. [James Thurber, quoted *New York Post*, Feb. 29, 1960]

Thurber, of course, was parodying Wordsworth's definition of poetry as "emotion recollected in tranquillity."

HUMPTY DUMPTY

11 Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall,
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.
All the king's horses,
And all the king's men,
Couldn't put Humpty together again.

[Nursery rhyme: a riddle, to which the answer was "an egg." Earliest known printed form 1803.]

The rhyme seems to be universal in all European languages and Humpty variously known as *Boule-Boule*, *Thille-Lille*, *Hillerin-Lillerin*, *Wirgele-Wargele*, etc.

Lewis Carroll used him in *Through the Looking Glass* because he was so well known.

HUNGER

12 Hunger is the teacher of the arts and the inspirer of invention. [Persius: *Prologue to the Satires*]

13 A hungry people is unreasonable, unjust and unmerciful. [Seneca: *De brevitate vitae* XVIII]

14 Hunger is the best sauce. [Cicero: *De finibus* II]

The proverb is universal and has been attributed to Socrates. The Latins had also a saying that hunger is the best cook, as also do the Germans. The French say that hunger is the first course. The proverb appears in John Florio's *Firste Fruits* and in Cervantes: *Don Quixote* II.5., etc., *ad infinitum*.

15 I am so sore forhungered that my belly weeneth my throat is cut. [John Palsgrave: *Acolastus* (1540)]

Palsgrave was probably quoting, for the jest is redolent of hoary antiquity. Like many jokes whose age must be defined in geologic terms, however, it is still alive. It's very common in rustic American humor where it usually appears as: "I

6TH STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

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October 21, 1988, Friday, Late City Final Edition

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HEADLINE: Candidates Try Their Hand at Humor

BYLINE: By MAUREEN BOWD

BODY:

The two men who have been calling each other terrible names sat down together tonight to eat an elegant dinner, separated only by John Cardinal O'Connor.

As the band aptly played "I Can't Get Started With You," Vice President Bush and Michael S. Dukakis began their third face-to-face contest of the political season.

Instead of lecterns, there was rack of lamb. Instead of interrogating panelists, there was a collection of the city's leaders in business, government, politics and journalism. At New York's most famous nonpolitical political event, the Alfred E. Smith Memorial Dinner, the Presidential candidates were expected to put issues aside and show some grace, some wit and some white-tie, sartorial style.

With a martini-dry delivery that came across better than many had expected, Mr. Dukakis opened with a jibe about the many states that the Vice President claims as residences.

Telling the audience that his wife, Kitty, could not be with him because she was campaigning in Texas, he said there "might" be a Texan on the dais with him. "Kitty's in a hotel room in Dallas, so I guess she qualifies as a Texan," he said, as the audience laughed.

Mr. Bush, who came with his wife, Barbara, fought back by remarking that Mrs. Bush is "a native New Yorker."

Calling the rival he has denounced on the trail "Mike," he made fun of his own elite background, saying: "You've seen the portraits of the Mayflower. My people are the ones waving the Bloomingdale's shopping bags."

Mr. Bush said he had not seen so many well-dressed people since "I went to a come-as-you-are-party in Kennebunkport."

Variations on a Theme

With a somewhat wooden delivery, he added a staple of American humor - the withering comment of a long-suffering wife. Recalling how he had practiced his banquet jokes on her, Mr. Bush said she remarked: "I know Johnny Carson. Johnny Carson's a friend of mine. And George, you're no Johnny Carson."

(c) 1988 The New York Times, October 21, 1988

Mr. Dukakis, too, tried a variation on the now-famous debate barb of Senator Lloyd Bentsen to Senator Dan Quayle on Mr. Quayle's comparing himself to John F. Kennedy.

He began by saying that Al Smith, who in 1928 became the first Catholic to be nominated for President, had been described once as a "pugnacious 5-foot-7 with sloping shoulders and an unimposing appearance."

"And when he ran against Herbert Hoover in 1928, they even called him a liberal," the Massachusetts Governor said, mimicking the sneering tone Mr. Bush uses when he says the "L word." Mr. Dukakis said: "Now before the Vice President says it, I know I'm no Al Smith."

Mr. Dukakis also tried several self-deprecating lines, making fun of his tank ride, his prominent nose and his cool demeanor. "I've been told that I lack passion, but that doesn't affect me one way or the other," he said dryly. "Some people say I'm arrogant, but I know better than that."

He also made fun of his size. "You've said many times in this campaign that you want to give America back to the little guy," he said to his Republican rival. "Mr. Vice President, I am that man."

Even though politicians like Jimmy Carter have foundered at past Al Smith dinners on the shoals of seriousness, the underdog Democrat could not resist trying to score points on issues.

Concerned that he did not rebut Mr. Bush well enough at the last debate, Mr. Dukakis dispensed with whimsy quickly and turned to crime, drugs, AIDS and the homeless.

While the 2,400 guests at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel were still eating their lemon mousse cake from their \$500 plates at the annual fund-raising dinner sponsored by the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of New York, the serious Democrat got serious.

Mr. Bush had received a warm welcome in Queens yesterday when, paying tribute to the two New York police officers slain this week, he bashed Mr. Dukakis for being too soft on crime. So Mr. Dukakis countered: "When a law enforcement officer is killed in the line of duty, we all die a little bit. And when drugs are the cause - as they almost always seem to be - that grief must be matched by determination. Determination to beat the drug peddlers and thugs who are terrorizing our people and poisoning our kids."

The Vice President's speech, written by Peggy Noonan, was short on issues but was just as political in its own way. It was stocked with all the patriotic symbols with which Mr. Bush has tried to associate himself: praising the Olympic athletes, the American flag and the workers who helped save Jessica McClure, the little girl who fell down a well in Texas a year ago.

Praise for Reagan

Referring to the apparent successes of the Reagan Administration, Mr. Bush said, "Perhaps the central paradox for me this year, as for Governor Dukakis, is that while every day we travel the country talking about its problems, it's hard to see so much of America and not feel confident."

(c) 1988 The New York Times, October 21, 1988

He also praised Mr. Reagan, whom he called "the boss." "He doesn't make much of it, but he is a strong man. And yet there is an idealism in him, a sweetness that softens his judgments and lights him from within."

The dinner has been an always vivid and often controversial event since it began in 1945, a year after Governor Smith's death. With Mayor Koch, Senators Alfonse M. D'Amato and Daniel Patrick Moynihan and Governor Kean of New Jersey looking on, this year was no exception.

With the Presidential race so hard fought and scripted, everyone was eager to see the candidates together one more time. At a crowded photo opportunity before the dinner, the two nominees, dressed identically in white tie, silently smiled and shook hands four times for the cameras.

John Kennedy, who has often been invoked by Democrats and Republicans alike in this campaign, gave what everyone agrees was the best speech in the history of the Smith dinner, and what some have called one of the wittiest political speeches ever.

Kennedy, whose Catholicism and facile wit made him the perfect speaker for the charity event, said that Francis Cardinal Spellman was "the only man in America who could bring together amicably at the same banquet table, for the first time in this campaign, two political leaders who are increasingly apprehensive about the November election, who have long eyed each other suspiciously and who have disagreed so strongly both publicly and privately: Vice President Nixon and Governor Rockefeller."

GRAPHIC: photo of Vice President Bush, Gov. Michael S. Dukakis and John Cardinal O'Connor (NYT/Angel Franco)

SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION OF 1988

NAME: DOWD, MAUREEN; BUSH, GEORGE (VICE PRES); DUKAKIS, MICHAEL S (GOV)

408-
~~808~~-662-1308

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

FROM Jack
Pitney

We went too far in
opening WH to members of Congress

As we went to, Bob Byrd serenading us w/ violin
& Nunt Giv. was reading out a bedtime
story entitled "Chinese War Tactics of the
14th Century."

had to adjust personal style
surf fishing
sea turtle bobbed up next to me

SS grabbed it & wrestled it to the ground

watching a lot of movies on our VCRs
the titles remind me of recent
events:

D.O.A. - the proposed bee on S & L deposits
Duck Soup - Dick Dorman's budget testimony
The Greatest Show on Earth - Nunt & Tony
as House whips

The Wit & Wisdom of Mark Twain edited by Alex Ayers

quite a nice compliment—but if he would do the translating for me I would try to get along without the compliment.

—*A Tramp Abroad*, 1880, vol. 1, ch. 16

LATE

Mark Twain once arrived over an hour late for a lecture in Duluth, Minnesota. Although the delay was not his fault, the crowd was impatient and somewhat irascible by the time he showed up. But Mark Twain disarmed them by strolling into the lecture hall in a leisurely fashion and saying, "I am glad that my strenuous efforts did succeed in getting me here just in time."

The crowd laughed and their hostility melted away.

LAUGHTER

Your race, in its poverty, has unquestionably one really effective weapon—laughter. Power, money, persuasion, supplication, persecution—these can lift at a colossal humbug—push it a little—weaken it a little, century by century; but only laughter can blow it to rags and atoms at a blast. Against the assault of laughter nothing can stand.

—"The Mysterious Stranger," story,
1916, ch. 10

Such a laugh was money in a man's pocket; because it cut down on the doctor's bills like everything.

—*Tom Sawyer*, 1876, ch. 30

LAW

To succeed in the other trades, capacity must be shown; in the law, concealment of it will do.

—*Following the Equator*, 1897, vol. 2, ch. 1

Trial by jury is the palladium of our liberties. I do not know what a palladium is, having never seen a palladium, but it is a good thing no doubt at any rate.

—*Roughing It*, 1872, ch. 49

DOUG GAMBLE

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To: CHRIS WINSTON

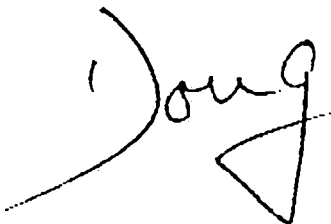
Following is material for the "Gridiron Dinner" for the President.

I ended up doing a little more than I expected to do, but this is an important event and I wanted to help out.

I have a hunch the audience might expect the President to say at least something about Tower, but if he's dead set against it he obviously won't. However, I've included a couple of mild references to the Tower situation, just in case.

I hope I can drop by to meet you when I'm in Washington next Thursday and Friday.

Regards,



P.S. I've put my invoice at the end of the material.

7 PAGES FOLLOW...

DRAFT**OFFICE VERSION**

①

NOT FOR DISTRIBUTION

Thank you. Thank you, Larry. Your kind words are appreciated but entirely unnecessary. It's nice just to be invited out for something other than an overseas funeral.

Of course, it was 200 years ago today that the battleship Maine was sunk when the Germans bombed Pearl Harbor... ((PAUSE)) Wait a minute. I may have that date wrong.

This is the largest black tie group I've seen since those coming out parties during the Iowa primary.

Batting clean-up at the Gridiron is no easy task. They say it should be done with the same degree of alacrity and nonchalance that one would display in authorizing a highly intelligent trained bear to remove your appendix.

Still, I'm not going to take off the gloves. I'm a WASP. And you know what "WASP" stands for: "We Always Say Please."

Been listening up here tonight. Some presidential honeymoon. Hasn't been a honeymoon like this since the one shared by Mike Tyson and Robin Givens.

Sure, I've been stung. My friend George Will predicted that if I got elected, the sound you'd be hearing from the Oval Office would be "the whining arf of a lap dog." And now Millie goes and proves him right.

Betrayed by my own dog. Pretty hard to stare down the Russians when the Leader of the Free World gets kicked out of bed by a pregnant ~~springer~~ spaniel.

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DRAFT

(3)

President means all sorts of honorary degrees. Not for me. Yale and Andover want theirs back.

Just call me the "Education President."

✓ I do believe we're on our way to a kinder, gentler nation. Especially with Sam Donaldson out of the White House.

You've heard that Diane Sawyer is joining Sam for a new show. That's about hiring Mary Poppins with Mr. Spock.

★ Some people say our agenda's confusing, our cabinet divided, that you can't follow what's going on. This from the same people who appear on the McLaughlin Group?

I do admit we got off to a slow start. At first I was busy writing notes to all those kids whose letters President Reagan read on TV. Then there were the handwritten thank you's to each citizen who voted for me.

By the way, does the hiring freeze apply to sub-cabinet appointments?

★ Anyway, what's wrong with going slow? If we actually start replacing the Reagan appointments with our own people, how are we gonna blame problems on our predecessors?

You all know Lee Atwater. Lee's an innovative conservative. He wants Russians to stop jamming VOA and Republicans to start jamming R & B.

Most of you probably saw Lee on stage during Inauguration week or on the Letterman show. The sunglasses. The loud rock music. The dancing and the sweat.

DRAFT

(2)

★ I regret that my Houston friends had to take such a beating. It's gonna end, and I'm gonna spare them and I'm gonna spare Washington. Read my lips: No new Texans.

★ Actually, Gorbachev told me he was surprised that I would go right out and ask people to "read my lips." Apparently, when I was CIA chief the KGB did that all the time.

We had a policeman on every corner when Gorbachev came to New York. Made him feel right at home.

★ President Reagan began as an actor and apparently Gorbachev plans to finish as one. He wants to star in a re-make of Mikhail's Navy.

★ Like everybody, when I was a kid I dreamed that someday I might grow up to be ... ((Pause)) ...a player in major league baseball. Now my kid buys a baseball club and he won't even let me try out. "Better stick with politics," George, Jr., said. "Baseball is a game of skill."

People say I'm indecisive. Well, I don't know about that...

✓ Other people think I'm overly cautious. Barabara says I should take the rear-view mirror off my stationary bicycle.

Some say my staff is too young and inexperienced. How many White House aides does it take to screw in a lightbulb? None. I've asked them to keep me in the dark.

Actually, the staff is great. But I have to be careful. Everything you say they do. Before dinner the other night I said to Barbara: "How about a little Chinese?" Before I knew it the Secret Service were trying to bring in Deng Xiaoping.

Some people say I mangle the language. That's why Barbara has devoted her life to promoting literacy. Usually, getting elected

DRAFT

⑤

It's easy to be misinterpreted in this town. The other day a reporter asked if the unfairness of the Tower nomination had left any memories. I said: "None." ((Nunn))

Since the Senate leadership is here, there's another Pentagon appointment I'm ready to announce. Assistant Secretary for Congressional Liaison. He's tough on defense. He's a strong supporter. He's Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Since nearly all Kissinger's people are already in place we figured we needed one guy with an accent. Somebody's gonna have to do Nightline.

Some people say I'm boring. And it's true, we really haven't been able to get a world-class scandal going. You would not normally think this would be a problem for a man who told Idaho Republicans he had sex with Ronald Reagan and who made polaroids of congressmen being entertained in the Lincoln bedroom.

Really, the new standards have made seeking public office an impossible task. If the trend keeps up, the only people still eligible for appointment will be the Pennsylvania Dutch. And they won't be able to use the telephones.

You know my aide Fred McClure. Boy can he pick 'em. He worked for Ed Meese, John Tower and Frank Lorenzo. When I go to the track I ask Fred's advice and then bet on the other horses.

The budget deficit. Voodoo, Sununu and deep doo doo.

The first is the problem, the second is the solution and the third is what we may be facing in 1992.

But having an outsider like Governor Sununu look at the deficit has actually brought forth some interesting new ideas. He figured out that while it costs the taxpayers nearly a hundred grand a year to

DRAFT

⑥

keep a man in Congress, it only costs twenty-five grand to keep a man in prison.

A simple relocation would reduce the Congressional budget by three-fourths -- and do much to restore Executive authority.

"Sununu Economics." I liked John's idea of helping the S & L's by having each new customer deposit a toaster. Even to Dick Darman, very few toasters are gonna look like a duck.

But we gotta get the budget under control. You know about the B-1 bomber that crashed a few months back. Third time one's crashed. 250 million dollars this plane costs. The reason this time: The windshield fogged over.

I'm sorry. Even a volkswagen has a defroster. I mean, couldn't someone at the Pentagon have at least slipped in a scraper?

Then there's the Stealth Bomber. Years of research. Billions of dollars. But it works, it's true: This plane can be flown from the United States clear through to Moscow without ever being detected on a radar screen. Now all we need to do is come up with an American kid who can find Russia on a map.

But we've getting tough on defense contractors. From now on if the Pentagon wants to get sophisticated weapons, they're going to have to go down and buy them at the gun shop like everybody else.

You know the NRA position. Guns don't kill people. Grapes do.

Iran's another problem. Years of calculated pressure to try to put one over the Ayatollah. Freezing his assets. Closing embassies. Trade boycott. Sending carriers to the Gulf.

Now it turns out all we had to do to get the Mullahs mad: Write a book.

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(7)

Used to be you had to be elected President to get yourself a death threat from the Ayatollah.

From now on, we're going to save a fortune in defense. Rushdie's next books are called "Apartheid Stinks" and "Kaddafy's Pilots Are Sissies."

[Gracious closing remarks to be inserted here.]

DRAFT

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3/30/89; 12:00 pm
Draft 3
(grid.gb)

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: GRIDIRON DINNER
CAPITAL HILTON
SATURDAY, APRIL 1, 1989

Thank you, Larry [O'Roark, Gridiron Club President]
I must say I'm impressed.
This is the largest white tie group I've seen
Since those coming out parties in Iowa.

((IF EVENING IS LONG)) By the way, next year --
Who do I see
About getting an earlier spot in the show?
((PAUSE))
Even the Academy Awards aren't this long.

I gotta tell you, though,
After watching XXXX & XXXXXXXX
Trying to act and sing tonight,
I have a feeling you may soon be joining
Salman Rushdie in hiding.

Believe me, I know.
Ronald Reagan is a tough act to follow.
Let's face it: If I was funnier than him
I would have won in 1980 ((PAUSE))
And he'd be up here tonight,
Trying to laugh away the Bush deficit.

People say I lack political courage.
Don't forget. ((FORCEFULLY))
I'm the one who went to the Amish
and told them to "Just say no."

I'm the one who went back to Yale
To fight against illiteracy.

((SHAKE HEAD)) Rough night up here.
Some presidential honeymoon.
Hasn't been a honeymoon like this since Mike Tyson's.

But I know how to take a hit.
George Will predicted
That if I got elected,
The sound you'd hear from the Oval Office
Would be "the arf of a lap dog." ((INCRECULOUSLY))
And now Millie goes and proves him right.

Millie had 6 puppies. ((SHORT PAUSE))
Actually, she had 8,
But the Senate rejected two.

Still, I'm glad that one of the puppies
Was a boy.
Now Congress will have to be more specific
When they refer to that
S. O. B. in the White House.

Some say we got off to a slow start.
Ridiculous.
And I'll deny it in a formal statement
As soon as we hire some speechwriters.

I think our administration
Has gotten off to a good start.
The trip to Japan was very touching.
It was a nostalgic experience,
Visiting our money.

You've got to have a good staff to make the White House run.
Like Fred McClure up here.
Fred's worked for John Tower and Frank Lorenzo.
((TO FRED)) Come to think of it,
Did you ever pilot any ships for Exxon?

Then there's Lee Atwater.
Lee's a smart guy. ((PAUSE))
He's the first person in history
To go through Howard University
In just three days.

Have you seen Lee on stage?
Inauguration week.
The Letterman show.
The sunglasses.
The loud music.
The dancing and the sweat. ((PAUSE))
Now I know what Lee meant
When he said he wanted to lead the Party.

As Lee's often told me,
You can't get a break from the media.
Bill Bennett announced he'd stopped smoking.
Next day, the papers called him a quitter.

Bill's taken on the tough job of figuring out
What to do about semi-automatic weapons.

We all know the NRA's position:

Guns don't kill people,
Grapes do.

And of course, if we outlaw grapes,
only outlaws will have grapes.

You'd think the White House would be safe from crime.
But last night Barbara was headed out the door to walk Millie,
Looked back, and said, "Cover me."

Barbara's told me she's totally opposed
To the availability of assault weapons.
But I told her, "How am I going to take
Microphones and word processors away from reporters?"

Even my grandkids are starting to pick up
Bad habits from the media.
The other day, one of them asked for a candy bar
And I said "No".
Then she said, "I'd like to ask a follow-up."

Campaign-style politics has even come to Moscow.
You can tell they're not used to campaigning.
I saw Boris Yeltsin on television the other night:
Sitting in an 18-wheeler, pledging allegiance,
Criticizing the pollution in Odessa Harbor.

I had a feeling Yeltsin would win though. ((SHORT PAUSE))
Once I found out his opponent had spent a lot of time
In the Red Army -- riding around in Soviet tanks.

People wonder whether Gorbachev
Is going to be able to remain in power.
I talked to him on the phone the other day.
He said, "Things aren't so bad.
At least I don't have Newt Gingrich after me."

We do a lot of kidding around in this town -- believe me, I know, since I'm often the target. But it's important to be able to laugh. Because even though humor isn't singled out in the First Amendment, as tonight's friendly competition shows, it's darn near a national imperative. Americans are supposed to take their responsibilities seriously -- but not themselves.

Mark Twain called laughter the "one really effective weapon," against which no humbug can stand. Amen.

Laughter is part of the magic of America, part of the magic of our politics and our press. A year from now -- heck, a week from now -- there'll be all sorts of new material. My misstatements alone should give you plenty to work with. And there'll be things yet unthought of, as unlikely as Rushdie's book or Millie's puppies.

I wish you happy hunting. And I wish you laughter in your work. I promise to do my part -- Remember Pearl Harbor.

Good night, and God bless you all.

#

Dave Demarest
edits
(McNally/Simon)
3/24/89; 2:00 pm
Draft 1
(grid)

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: GRIDIRON DINNER
CAPITAL HILTON
SATURDAY, APRIL 1, 1989

Thank you, Larry [O'Roark, Gridiron Club President]
Your kind words are appreciated,
But entirely unnecessary.
It's nice just to be invited out
For something other than an overseas funeral.

Still, I'm impressed.
This is the largest white tie group I've seen
Since those coming out parties in Iowa.

Larry told me earlier that Bob Dole had called
~~And said,~~ ^{asked to make sure that} "I certainly hope Washington's Power Couple
^{would} Will be invited to the Gridiron."

Larry said, "Of course. ^{He'd} ~~I've~~ already invited the Mosbachers."

^{thought} I ~~was hoping~~ the world's ^{thought} ~~most powerful~~ editor-in-chief
Might be here.

But I see the Ayatollah couldn't make it.

I've been asked to read an announcement: ((PAUSE))

All door prize winners:

Please see Nick Brady

About picking up your free S & L.

By the way, next year --

Who do I see

About getting an earlier spot in the show.

Even the Academy Awards aren't this long.

I gotta tell you, though,
 After watching members of the media
 Trying to act and sing tonight,
 I have a feeling you may soon be joining
 Salman Rushdie in hiding.

Seriously though, your performances really registered. ((PAUSE))
 On the Misery Index.

Really, though, I've enjoyed every minute of it.
 But ~~it's been a long night.~~

~~And~~ you know me. ((PAUSE))

~~I'm not one to be kept waiting in the wings.~~
Know how to

And, Ronald Reagan is a tough act to follow.

Let's face it:

If I was funnier than him

I would have won in 1980 --

And he'd be up here tonight,

Trying to laugh away the Bush deficit.

I can't stay very long tonight.

My old friend Jerry Ford

Is coming over in the morning to play horseshoes,

And I'm going to be up half the night

Boarding up the White House windows.

In preparing for tonight,

I noticed on the calendar

That it was ²⁰~~200~~ years ago today

That the battleship Maine was sunk

When the Germans bombed Pearl Harbor ... ((PAUSE))

Wait a minute. ((PAUSE))

I may have that date wrong.

Rough night up here.

Some presidential honeymoon.

Hasn't been a honeymoon like this since Mike Tyson's.

I guess the most important thing I've learned
since becoming President

Is that you can't ^{take} criticism too seriously.

Like when People say I'm indecisive.

Well, I don't know about that.

People say I lack political courage. *Don't forget*
~~They've already forgotten.~~ ((FORCEFULLY))

I'm the one who went to these Amish people
and told them to "Just say no."

I'm the one who went back to Yale to fight against illiteracy.

People say that ~~I've got no agenda, no plans,~~ *my agenda's confusing, my staff divided, and you can't follow what's going on.*

~~That nothing is happening in Washington.~~

~~I'm sorry, but I just don't catch their drift.~~

This from the guys on the McLaughlin Group

~~Some say I'm overly cautious - Barbara says I should take the rear view~~

People say I'm inart-, inartic-, Antarctic, ((GIVE UP)) *missed off my stationary bike.*

That I can't speak well. *Well, that's, you know, I just don't think*

~~Well, Al Haig's coming over to help me with that.~~ *that's, well - no way*

Hey just get that outta here.

(PAUSE)

((INCRECUDLOUSLY)) And people still wonder why

Barbara's devoted her life

To fighting illiteracy!

As president, I was looking forward to
Receiving some honorary degrees.
Andover and Yale called.
They want theirs back.

~~Just call me the Education President.~~

But I know how to take a hit.
George Will predicted
That if I got elected,
The sound you'd hear from the Oval Office
Would be "the arf of a lap dog."
And now Millie goes and proves him right.

Betrayed by my own dog.
Pretty hard to stare down Gorbachev
When the Leader of the Free World
Gets kicked out of bed
By a pregnant ~~springer~~ spaniel.

I've heard of a President being in the dog house,
but this is ridiculous.

I don't know why Millie had to
Go get pregnant in the first place.
I should have used my authority to order a
60-day cooling-off period.

Six dogs.
Now I'll really be in deep ~~doe-deo~~.

Maybe you heard --

Millie's mate was a sire named

"Tug Farrish the Third." [Tug III]

Just what I need to shed my preppy image --

Puppies with Roman numerals after their names.

Still, I'm glad that one of the puppies

Was a boy.

Now Congress will have to be more specific

When they refer to that

S.O.B. in the White House.

I may have gotten a little carried away

When I opened up the White House to Congress.

We were going to bed last night and saw

Bob Byrd playing the violin on the Truman Balcony.

Joe Kennedy was playing with the puppies.

Newt Gingrich was reading a bedtime story:

Chinese War Tactics in the 14th Century.

Congress should be warned, though.

I can play rough if I need to.

Remember all those photos I took

Of Congressmen in the Lincoln Bedroom.

I've still got the negatives.

I'm not the only one from the Lone Star State

Who's catching flak.

Baker. Bentsen. Mosbacher. Gramm. Wright. Cavazos.

At the White House there's Bates, McClure, Untermeyer and
Cicconi.

Had enough, Washington? ((LOUD AND SLOW))

READ MY LIPS: NO NEW TEXANS.

The key is knowing your aides.

Like Fred McClure up here.

He's worked for Ed Meese, John Tower, and Frank Lorenzo.

When I go to the track,

I ask Fred's advice ((PAUSE))

And then bet on the other horses.

I guess you all have heard about the sequel

They're making for "Rain Man."

It's about a White House official who travels across the country

With a reporter,

Talking on background the whole way.

It's called "Dar-Man."

then there's that great autobiographical flick 'the Last Emperor' about John Seiden - it's called the Last Emperor.

Then there's Lee Atwater.

Lee's a smart guy. ((PAUSE))

He's the first person in history

To go through Howard University

In just three days.

Lee's ~~an innovative conservative.~~

Lee wants Russians to stop jamming VOA --

And Republicans to start jamming R&B.

Have you seen Lee on stage?

Inauguration week.

The Letterman show.

The sunglasses.

The loud music.

The dancing and the sweat. ((PAUSE))

Now I know what Lee meant
When he said he wanted to lead the Party.

We should all just be grateful
Lee never learned to play the accordion.

Atwater aside,
~~I do admit we got off to a slow start.~~
There were the usual hassles in moving.
I turned in Air Force Two.
Got charged extra
For not filling up the gas tank.

*Some say we got off to a
slow start. Ridiculous.
And I'll deny it in a
formal statement as soon
as we hire some
speechwriters.*

December and January were rough,
~~Doing~~ ^{forty-two million} handwritten thank you's.

~~For everyone who voted for me.~~ *Now that's a writer's cramp. . . (PAUSE)*
*And all those
Smiley faces.*

Even Barbara thinks I'm overly cautious.
She says I should take the rear-view mirror
Off my stationary bike.

And it may be time to lift the hiring freeze
On sub-cabinet appointments.

In fact, with so many Senators here,
I might as well announce another appointment.
Assistant Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs.
He's tough on defense.
He's an strong supporter.
He's Arnold Schwarzenegger.

You can hold a hearing.
But I'd hate to be the guy to vote against him.

But, it is great way to build good will —
like with Congress.

~~Maybe sent in the~~ 8
~~Congress have gotten one my notes.~~

Seriously, I bear no grudge about the recent hearings.

And to prove it,

I sent Sam Nunn a basket of fruit.

A few apples, some grapes.

I wish this controversy about harmful apples

Would be cleared up once and for all.

As I sat down to dinner last night, two Secret Service agents
Wrestled my Waldorf Salad to the floor.

All in all, I'd say our administration

Has gotten off to a good start.

The trip to Japan was a big success.

The Japanese were impressed by the fact

That I'm so good at bowing and scrapping.

Then I explained a Vice President ^{what} gets ^{does} a lot of practice bowing --
And scrapping.

Actually, my trip to Japan was very touching.

It was a nostalgic experience,

Visiting our money.

I've been asked if development

Of the new FSX fighter with Japan might mean

The sharing of some Pentagon secrets.

Maybe -- but what do we care

If the Japanese suddenly start paying

\$600 dollars for a toilet seat.

Nevertheless, I do believe we are on our way

To a kinder, gentler nation.

Especially since Sam Donaldson left the White House.

You can't get a break from the media.
 Bill Bennett announced he'd stopped smoking.
 Next day, the papers called him a quitter.

Bill's taken on the tough job of figuring out
 What to do about semi-automatic weapons.
 We all know the NRA's position:
 Guns don't kill people,
Grapes do.

And Of course, if we outlaw ~~all the~~ grapes,
 only ~~the~~ outlaws will have grapes.

Still, this whole thing has been confusing.
 I have a hard time picturing Southerners
 Putting up a fruit pantry in the back window of their pick-ups.

Seriously
 I am ~~particularly~~ concerned about the
 Crime situation in D.C.
~~I didn't know how bad it was until~~ I went aboard Marine One
 And asked the pilot where to sit.
 He said, "Over there, behind the tailgunner."

I went over to Mayor Barry's office
 The other day to talk about it, but he wasn't there.
 Apparently, the police tipped him off that I was coming.

By the way, someone ought to tell Mayor Barry that
 The Superfund is not his ^{entertainment} ~~expense~~ account.

And that the Supercollider is not his limousine.

But we will make him eligible for our new training wage.

✓ *Two grapes out of hundreds of thousands. ~~How do~~
 I want to meet those grape inspectors. Get them working
 on this drug thing. ~~Give them some grape-snuffing dogs?~~
 Or did they use*

You'd think the White House would be safe from crime. *millie*
But last night Barbara was headed out the door to walk ~~the dog~~,
Looked back, and said, "Cover me."

We were meeting in the Oval Office this week
To decide whether to call out the National Guard in D.C.
We had pretty much decided against it
When Dan Quayle stood up and said,
"Come on guys, for a lot of us Guardsmen,
This might be our only chance at combat pay."

Barbara's told me she's totally opposed
To the availability of assault weapons.
But I told her, "How am I going to take
Microphones and word processors away from reporters?"

One of the problems is defining
Exactly what a "semi-automatic" is.
I'm not so sure myself.
Heck, it sounds to me like
The editorial policy at the Washington Post.

I have to be careful here.
To be fair, when they're wrong,
The Washington Post does run corrections.
For instance, on Page 3 the other day, it said:
"Nothing in last week's Style section was true."

Even my grandkids are starting to pick up
Bad habits from the media.
The other day, one of them asked for a candy bar
And I said "No".
Then she said, "I'd like to ask a follow-up."

Campaign-style politics has even come to Moscow.
 You can tell they're a little rusty at campaigning.
 I saw Boris Yeltsin on television last night:
 Sitting in an 18-wheeler, pledging allegiance,
 Wearing a policeman's cap and criticizing the pollution
 in Odessa Harbor.

I called Yeltsin with a few pointers:
 Don't forget to campaign at those coming-out parties
 in Siberia.

People wonder whether Gorbachev
 Is going to be able to remain in power.
 So I called him and asked him.
 He said, "Things aren't so bad.
 At least I don't have Newt Gingrich after me."

The glasnost and perestroika in Russia today is amazing.
 They're openly discussing Stalin's crimes;
 Brezhnev's lavish lifestyle.
 Coming out next, I hear,
 Is a book called, "Lenin Was Lousy at Chess."

We kid about the Soviets. Sorry, Yuri [Dubinin].
 But the truth is, the novelty of the embryonic elections in
 Moscow this week is yet another reminder of how uncommon our
 traditions are.

You may recall Yakov Smirnoff's remark about how they have
 freedom of speech in the Soviet Union -- but with America, you
 have freedom after you speak. As he puts it: "It's a nice
 little feature."

Although humor isn't singled out in the First Amendment, as tonight's friendly competition shows, it's darn near a national imperative. Americans are supposed to take their responsibilities seriously -- but not themselves.

You've heard me declare it before: I'm not in Washington to question anyone's motives. I do not intend to let politics strain civility, credibility or friendship; it ought not deprive any of us of a good night's sleep, a partner on the playing fields, or ruin so much as a game of horseshoes. And when it does, there's no better antidote than a good laugh, preferably at one's own expense.

Mark Twain called laughter the "one really effective weapon," against which no humbug can stand. Amen.

Laughter is part of the magic of America, part of the magic of our politics and our press. A year from now -- heck, a week from now -- there'll be all sorts of new material. My misstatements alone should give you plenty to work with. And there'll be things yet unthought of, as unlikely as Rushdie's book or Millie's puppies. I wish you happy hunting. And I wish you laughter in your work.

Good night, and God bless you all.

#

*Dave Remarest
edits*
(McNally/Simon)
3/30/89; 7:30 pm
Draft 4
(grid.gb)

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: GRIDIRON DINNER
CAPITAL HILTON
SATURDAY, APRIL 1, 1989

Thank you, Larry [O'Roark, Gridiron Club President]

I must say I'm impressed.

This is the largest white tie group I've seen
Since those coming out parties in Iowa.

((IF EVENING IS LONG)) By the way, next year --

Who do I see

About getting an earlier spot in the show?

((PAUSE))

Even the Academy Awards ^{weren't} aren't this long.

Have we gotten to best picture yet?

I gotta tell you, though,

After watching XXXX & XXXXXXXX

Trying to act and sing tonight,

I have a feeling you may soon be joining
Salman Rushdie in hiding.

Believe me, I know.

Ronald Reagan is a tough act to follow.

Let's face it: If I was funnier than him

I would have won in 1980 ((PAUSE))

And he'd be up here tonight,

Trying to laugh away the Bush deficit.

[I guess the most important thing I've learned

Since becoming President

Is that you can't take criticism too seriously.]

[People say I'm indecisive.
Well, I don't know about that.]

People say I lack political courage.
Don't forget. ((FORCEFULLY))
I'm the one who went to the Amish
and told them to "Just say no."

[People say that my agenda's confusing,
My staff's divided,
And you can't follow what's going on.
This from the guys on the McLaughlin Group.]

I'm the one who went back to Yale
To fight against illiteracy.

((SHAKE HEAD)) *Boy this is a rough crowd*
~~Rough night up here.~~
Some presidential honeymoon.
Hasn't been a honeymoon like this since Mike Tyson's.

But I know how to take a hit.
George Will predicted
That if I got elected,
The sound you'd hear from the Oval Office
Would be "the arf of a lap dog." ((INCREDULOUSLY))
And now Millie goes and proves him right.

[Betrayed by my own dog.
Pretty hard to stare down Gorbachev
When the Leader of the Free World
Gets kicked out of bed
By a pregnant spaniel.]

But, I am glad that one of the puppies
Was a boy.

Now Congress will have to be more specific
When they refer to that
S. O. B. in the White House.

You know, some say we got off to a slow start.
Ridiculous.

And I'll deny it in a formal statement
As soon as we hire some speechwriters.

But actually, I think our administration
Has gotten off to a good start.
The trip to Japan was very touching.
It was a nostalgic experience,
Visiting our money.

You've got to have a good staff to make the White House run.
Like Fred McClure up here.
Fred's worked for ^{Ed Meese} John Tower and Frank Lorenzo, ~~SE~~
((punchline))

And I was glad to see you appreciate
Lee Atwater's talents too.
Lee's a smart guy. ((PAUSE))
He's the first person in history
To go through Howard University
In just three days.

~~Not left of Meese's staff~~

Have you seen Lee on stage?

Inauguration week.

The Letterman show.

The sunglasses.

The loud music.

The dancing and the sweat. ((PAUSE))

Now I know what Lee meant

When he said he wanted to lead the Party.

As Lee's often told me,

You can't get a break from the media.

Bill Bennett announced he'd stopped smoking.

Next day, the papers called him a quitter.

Bill's taken on the tough job of figuring out

What to do about semi-automatic weapons.

We all know the NRA's position:

Guns don't kill people,

Grapes do.

And of course, if we outlaw grapes,

only outlaws will have grapes.

[Actually, I wish this controversy about harmful apples

Would be cleared up once and for all.

As I sat down to dinner last night, two Secret Service agents

Wrestled my Waldorf Salad to the floor.]

[Seriously, I am concerned about the

Crime situation in D.C.

I went aboard Marine One

And asked the pilot where to sit.

He said, "^{Back}Over there, behind the ~~tail~~gunner."]

You'd think the White House would be safe from crime.
 But last night Barbara was headed out the door to walk Millie,
 Looked back, and said, "Cover me."

Barbara's told me ^{to ban} ~~she's~~ totally opposed
~~to the availability~~ of assault weapons.
 But, I told her, "How am I going to take
 Microphones and word processors away from reporters?"

*Barbara's
 the Assault weapons?
 those
 what should have
 been banned
 were those
 last three
 shots*

Even my grandkids are starting to pick up
 Bad habits from the media.
 The other day, one of them asked for a candy bar
 And I said "No".
 Then she said, "I'd like to ask a follow-up."

Watching you tonight brought back a lot of campaign memories.
 But campaign-style politics has even come to Moscow.
 You can tell they're not used to campaigning.
 I saw Boris Yeltsin on television the other night:
 Sitting in an 18-wheeler; pledging allegiance; and
 Criticizing the pollution in Odessa Harbor.

I had a feeling Yeltsin would win, though. ((SHORT PAUSE))
 Once I found out his opponent had spent a lot of time
 In the Red Army -- riding around in Soviet tanks.

People wonder whether Gorbachev
 Is going to be able to remain in power.
 I talked to him on the phone the other day.
 He said, "Things aren't so bad."
 At least I don't have Newt Gingrich after me."

We do a lot of kidding around in this town -- believe me, I know, since I'm often the target. But it's important to be able to laugh. Because even though humor isn't singled out in the First Amendment, as tonight's friendly competition shows, it's darn near a national imperative. Americans are supposed to take their responsibilities seriously -- but not themselves.

Mark Twain called laughter the "one really effective weapon," against which no humbug can stand. Amen.

Laughter is part of the magic of America, part of the magic of our politics and our press. A year from now -- heck, a week from now -- there'll be all sorts of new material. My misstatements alone should give you plenty to work with. And there'll be things yet unthought of, as unlikely as Rushdie's book or Millie's puppies.

I wish you happy hunting. And I wish you laughter in your work. I promise to do my part -- Remember Pearl Harbor.

Good night, and God bless you all.

#

Rehearsal version

(McNally/Simon)
3/30/89; 9:00 pm
(gridcl.bnd)

GRIDIRON DINNER
CAPITAL HILTON
SATURDAY, APRIL 1, 1989

Thank you, Larry [O'Roark, Gridiron Club President]

I must say I'm impressed.

This is the largest white tie group I've seen
Since those coming out parties in Iowa.

((IF EVENING IS LONG)) By the way, next year --

Who do I see

About getting an earlier spot in the show?

((PAUSE))

Even the Academy Awards weren't this long.

((PAUSE)) Have we gotten to best picture yet?

I gotta tell you, though,

After watching XXXX & XXXXXXXX

Trying to act and sing tonight,

I have a feeling you may soon be joining

Salman Rushdie in hiding.

Believe me, I know.

Ronald Reagan is a tough act to follow.

Let's face it: If I was funnier than him

I would have won in 1980 ((PAUSE))

And he'd be up here tonight,

Trying to laugh away the Bush deficit.

[I guess the most important thing I've learned

Since becoming President

Is that you can't take criticism too seriously.]

[People say I'm indecisive. ((PAUSE, THEN HESITANTLY))
Well, I don't know about that.]

People say I lack political courage.

Don't forget. ((FORCEFULLY))

I'm the one who went to the Amish
and told them to "Just say no."

[People say that my agenda's confusing,
My staff's divided,
And you can't follow what's going on.
This from the guys on the McLaughlin Group.]

I'm the one who went back to Yale
To fight against illiteracy.

((SHAKE HEAD)) Boy, this is a rough crowd.
Some presidential honeymoon.
Hasn't been a honeymoon like this since Mike Tyson's.

But I know how to take a hit.
George Will predicted
That if I got elected,
The sound you'd hear from the Oval Office
Would be "the arf of a lap dog." ((INCREDULOUSLY))
And now Millie goes and proves him right.

But, I am glad that one of the puppies
Was a boy.
Now Congress will have to be more specific
When they refer to that
S. O. B. in the White House.

3

You know, some say we got off to a slow start.
Ridiculous.

And I'll deny it in a formal statement
As soon as we hire some speechwriters.

But actually, I think our administration
Has gotten off to a good start.
The trip to Japan was very touching.
It was a nostalgic experience,
Visiting our money.

You've got to have a good staff
to make the White House run.
Like Fred McClure up here.
Fred's worked for Ed Meese, John Tower and Frank Lorenzo.
((punchline))

And I was glad to see you appreciate
Lee Atwater's talents too.
Lee's a smart guy. ((PAUSE))
He's the first person in history
To go through Howard University
In just three days.

Have you seen Lee on stage?

Inauguration week.

The Letterman show.

The sunglasses.

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The dancing and the sweat. ((PAUSE))

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When he said he wanted to lead the Party.

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Next day, the papers called him a quitter.

Bill's taken on the tough job of figuring out

What to do about semi-automatic weapons.

We all know the NRA's position:

Guns don't kill people, Grapes do.

And of course, if we outlaw grapes,

only outlaws will have grapes.

[Actually, I wish this controversy about harmful apples
Would be cleared up once and for all.

As I sat down to dinner last night, two Secret Service agents
Wrestled my Waldorf Salad to the floor.]

[Seriously, I am concerned about the
Crime situation in D.C.

I went aboard Marine One

And asked the pilot where to sit.

He said, "Back there, behind the gunner."]

5

You'd think the White House would be safe from crime.
But last night Barbara was headed out the door to walk Millie,
Looked back, and said, "Cover me."

Barbara's told me to ban assault weapons.
What should have been banned
were those last three skits. ((PAUSE))
But seriously, I told her, "How am I going to take
Microphones and word processors away from reporters?"

Even my grandkids are starting to pick up
Bad habits from the media.
The other day, one of them asked for a candy bar
And I said "No".
Then she said, "I'd like to ask a follow-up."

Watching you tonight brought back
A lot of campaign memories.
Campaign-style politics has even come to Moscow.
You can tell they're not used to campaigning.
I saw Boris Yeltsin on television the other night:
Sitting in an 18-wheeler; pledging allegiance; and
Criticizing the pollution in Odessa Harbor.

I had a feeling Yeltsin would win, though.
Once I found out his opponent had spent a lot of time
In the Red Army -- riding around in Soviet tanks.

People wonder whether Gorbachev
Is going to be able to remain in power.
I talked to him on the phone the other day.
He said, "Things aren't so bad.
At least I don't have Newt Gingrich after me."

6

We do a lot of kidding around in this town -- believe me, I know, since I'm often the target. But it's important to be able to laugh. Because even though humor isn't singled out in the First Amendment, as tonight's friendly competition shows, it's darn near a national imperative. Americans are supposed to take their responsibilities seriously -- but not themselves.

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I wish you happy hunting. And I wish you laughter in your work. I promise to do my part -- Remember Pearl Harbor.

Good night, and God bless you all.

#

GB final edits

(McNally/Simon)
3/30/89; 9:00 pm
(gridcl.bnd)

GRIDIRON DINNER
CAPITAL HILTON
SATURDAY, APRIL 1, 1989

Thank you, Larry [O'Roark, Gridiron Club President]

I must say I'm impressed.

This is the largest white tie group I've seen
Since those coming out parties in Iowa.

((IF EVENING IS LONG)) By the way, next year ~~was~~?

Who do I see

About getting an earlier spot in the show?

((PAUSE))

Even the Academy Awards weren't this long.

(ASIDE) ~~PAUSE~~ Have we gotten to best picture yet?

I gotta tell you, though,

After watching XXXX & XXXXXXXX

Trying to act and sing tonight,

I have a feeling you may soon be joining

Salman Rushdie in hiding.

Believe me, ^{though,} I know ~~what it's like~~ to follow

~~Ronald Reagan is a tough act to follow.~~

Let's face it: If I was funnier than ~~him~~ Ronald Reagan

I would have won in 1980 ((PAUSE))

And he'd be up here tonight.

Trying to laugh away the Bush deficit. 2

I guess the most important thing I've learned
Since becoming President

Is that you can't take criticism too seriously.

For example,

People say I'm indecisive. ((PAUSE, THEN HESITANTLY))
Well, I don't know about that.

People say I lack political courage.

Don't forget. ((FORCEFULLY))

I'm the one who went to the Amish
and told them to "Just say no."

People say that my agenda's confusing,
My staff's divided,

And you can't follow what's going on.

This from the guys on the McLaughlin Group.

I'm the one who went back to Yale
To fight against illiteracy.

((SHAKE HEAD)) Boy, this is a rough crowd.

Some presidential honeymoon.

Hasn't been a honeymoon like this since Mike Tyson's.

But I know how to take a hit.

George Will predicted

That if I got elected, 2,

The sound you'd hear from the Oval Office

Would be ^{look around} "the arf of a lap dog." ((INCREDULOUSLY)) (Pause)

And now Millie goes and proves him right.

[Betrayed by my own dog.

Pretty hard to stare down Gorbachev

When the Leader of the Free World

Gets kicked out of bed

By a pregnant spaniel.]

But, I am glad that one of the puppies
Was a boy.

Now Congress will have to be more specific
When they refer to that
S. O. B. in the White House.

Worst 3 & 4

You know, some say we got off to a slow start.
Ridiculous.

And I'll deny it in a formal statement
As soon as we hire some speechwriters.

~~But~~ ^A actually, I think our administration
Has gotten off to a good start.
The trip to Japan was very touching.
It was a nostalgic experience,
Visiting our ~~money~~.

You've got to have a good staff
to make the White House run.

Like Fred McClure up here.

Fred's worked for Ed Meese, John Tower and Frank Lorenzo.

((punchline)) *I always consult Fred whenever
I want to rob someone the wrong way.*

And I was glad to see you appreciate
Lee Atwater's talents too.

Lee's a smart guy. ((PAUSE))

He's the first person in history
To go through Howard University
In just three days.

Have you seen Lee on stage?

Inauguration week.

The Letterman show.

The sunglasses.

The loud music.

The dancing and the sweat. ((PAUSE))

Now I know what Lee meant

When he said he wanted to lead the Party.

As Lee's often told me,

You can't get a break from the media.

Bill Bennett announced he'd stopped smoking.

Next day, the papers called him a quitter.

insert #2

Bill's taken on the tough job of figuring out

What to do about semi-automatic weapons.

We all know the NRA's position:

Guns don't kill people, Grapes do.

And of course, if we outlaw grapes,

only outlaws will have grapes.

[Actually, I wish this controversy about harmful apples

Would be cleared up once and for all.

As I sat down to dinner last night, two Secret Service agents

Wrestled my Waldorf Salad to the floor.]

{ Seriously, I am concerned about the
Crime situation in D.C.

I went aboard Marine One

And asked the pilot where to sit.

He said, "Back there, behind the ^{tail} gunner." }

You'd think the White House would be safe from crime.
But last night Barbara was headed out the door to walk Millie,
Looked back, and said, "Cover me."

Barbara's told me to ban assault weapons.
What should have been banned
were those last three skits. ((PAUSE))
~~But seriously, I told her, "How am I going to take
Microphones and word processors away from reporters?"~~

Even my grandkids are starting to pick up
Bad habits from the media.
The other day, one of them asked for a candy bar
And I said "No".
Then she said, "I'd like to ask a follow-up."

Watching you tonight brought back
A lot of campaign memories.
Campaign-style politics has even come to Moscow.
You can tell they're not used to campaigning.
I saw Boris Yeltsin on television the other night:
Sitting in an 18-wheeler; pledging allegiance; and
Criticizing the pollution in Odessa Harbor.

I had a feeling Yeltsin would win, though.
Once I found out his opponent had spent a lot of time
~~In the Red Army~~ riding around in ~~Soviet~~ tanks.

People wonder whether Gorbachev
Is going to be able to remain in power.
I talked to him on the phone the other day.
He said, "Things aren't so bad."
At least I don't have Newt Gingrich after me."

We do a lot of kidding around in this town. -- ~~believe me, I know, since I'm often the target.~~ But it's important to be able to laugh. Because even though humor isn't singled out in the First Amendment, as tonight's friendly competition shows, it's darn near a national imperative. Americans are supposed to take their responsibilities seriously -- but not themselves.

Mark Twain called laughter the "one really effective weapon," against which no humbug can stand. Amen.

Laughter is part of the magic of America, part of the magic of our politics and our press. A year from now -- heck, a week from now -- there'll be all sorts of new material. My misstatements alone should give you plenty to work with. And there'll be things yet unthought of, as unlikely as ~~Rushdie's~~ ^{imported grapes} ~~book~~ or Millie's puppies. ^{twined}

I wish you happy hunting. And I wish you laughter in your work. I promise to do my part -- Remember Pearl Harbor.

Good night, and God bless you all.

#

(McNally/Simon)
3/27/89; 12:00 pm
Draft 2
(grid.dd)

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: GRIDIRON DINNER
CAPITAL HILTON
SATURDAY, APRIL 1, 1989

Thank you, Larry [O'Roark, Gridiron Club President]
Your kind words are appreciated,
But entirely unnecessary.
It's nice just to be invited out
For something other than an overseas funeral.

Still, I'm impressed.
This is the largest white tie group I've seen
Since those coming out parties in Iowa.

Larry told me earlier that Bob Dole had called
To make sure that Washington's Power Couple
Would be invited to the Gridiron.
Larry said, "Of course." He'd already invited the Mosbachers.

I thought the world's toughest editor-in-chief
Might be here.
But I see the Ayatollah couldn't make it.

I've been asked to read an announcement: ((PAUSE))
All door prize winners:
Please see Nick Brady
About picking up your free S & L.

By the way, next year --
Who do I see
About getting an earlier spot in the show.

Even the Academy Awards aren't this long.

I gotta tell you, though,
After watching members of the media
Trying to act and sing tonight,
I have a feeling you may soon be joining
Salman Rushdie in hiding.

Seriously though, your performances really registered. ((PAUSE))
On the Misery Index.

Really, though, I've enjoyed every minute of it.
But you know me. ((PAUSE))
I know how to wait in the wings.

And, Ronald Reagan is a tough act to follow.
Let's face it:
If I was funnier than him
I would have won in 1980 --
And he'd be up here tonight,
Trying to laugh away the Bush deficit.

I can't stay very long tonight.
My old friend Jerry Ford
Is coming over in the morning to play horseshoes,
And I'm going to be up half the night
Boarding up the White House windows.

In preparing for tonight,
I noticed on the calendar
That it was 90 years ago today
That the battleship Maine was sunk
When the Germans bombed Pearl Harbor ... ((PAUSE))
Wait a minute. ((PAUSE))
I may have that date wrong.

Rough night up here.

Some presidential honeymoon.

Hasn't been a honeymoon like this since Mike Tyson's.

I guess the most important thing I've learned
Since becoming President
Is that you can't take criticism too seriously.

People say I'm indecisive.
Well, I don't know about that.

People say I lack political courage.
Don't forget. ((FORCEFULLY))
I'm the one who went to the Amish
and told them to "Just say no."

I'm the one who went back to Yale
To fight against illiteracy.

People say that my agenda's confusing,
My staff's divided,
And you can't follow what's going on.
This from the guys on the McLaughlin Group.

Even Barbara thinks I'm overly cautious.
She says I should take the rear-view mirror
Off my exercise bike.

People say I'm inart-, inartic-, Antarctic, ((GIVE UP))
That I can't speak well.
Well, that's, you know, I just don't think that's,
Well, -- no way. Hey, just get that outta here. ((PAUSE))

((QUIETLY)) But I want my money back from Ailes.

As president, I was looking forward to
Receiving some honorary degrees.
Andover and Yale called.
They want theirs back.

But I know how to take a hit.
George Will predicted
That if I got elected,
The sound you'd hear from the Oval Office
Would be "the arf of a lap dog."
And now Millie goes and proves him right.

Betrayed by my own dog.
Pretty hard to stare down Gorbachev
When the Leader of the Free World
Gets kicked out of bed
By a pregnant spaniel.

I don't know why Millie had to
Go get pregnant in the first place.
I should have used my authority to order a
60-day cooling-off period.

Maybe you heard --
Millie's mate was a sire named
"Tug Farrish the Third." [Tug III]
Just what I need to shed my preppy image --
Puppies with Roman numerals after their names.

Still, I'm glad that one of the puppies
Was a boy.

Now Congress will have to be more specific
When they refer to that
S.O.B. in the White House.

Congress should be warned, though.
I can play rough if I need to.
Remember all those photos I took
Of Congressmen in the Lincoln Bedroom.
I've still got the negatives.

I'm not the only one from the Lone Star State
Who's catching flak.

Baker. Bentsen. Mosbacher. Gramm. Wright. Cavazos.
At the White House there's Bates, McClure, Untermyer and
Cicconi.

Had enough, Washington? ((LOUD AND SLOW))
READ MY LIPS: NO NEW TEXANS.

The key is knowing your aides.
Like Fred McClure up here.
He's worked for Ed Meese, John Tower, and Frank Lorenzo.
When I go to the track,
I ask Fred's advice ((PAUSE))
And then bet on the other horses.

I guess you all have heard about the sequel
They're making for "Rain Man."
It's about a White House official who travels across the country
With a reporter,
Talking on background the whole way.
It's called "Dar-Man."

Then there's that great autobiographical flick
About John Sununu --
It's called "The Last Emperor."

Then there's Lee Atwater.
Lee's a smart guy. ((PAUSE))
He's the first person in history
To go through Howard University
In just three days.

Have you seen Lee on stage?
Inauguration week.
The Letterman show.
The sunglasses.
The loud music.
The dancing and the sweat. ((PAUSE))
Now I know what Lee meant
When he said he wanted to lead the Party.

We should all just be grateful
Lee never learned to play the accordion.

Some say we got off to a slow start.
Ridiculous.
And I'll deny it in a formal statement
As soon as we hire some speechwriters.

December and January were rough,
Forty-two million handwritten thank you's
Now that's writer's cramp. ((PAUSE))
And all those smiley faces.

But, it is a great way to build good will,
-- like with Congress.

Seriously, I bear no grudge about the recent hearings.
And to prove it,
I sent Sam Nunn a basket of fruit.
A few apples, some grapes.

I wish this controversy about harmful apples
Would be cleared up once and for all.
As I sat down to dinner last night, two Secret Service agents
Wrestled my Waldorf Salad to the floor.

All in all, I'd say our administration
Has gotten off to a good start.
The trip to Japan was a big success.
The Japanese were impressed by the fact
That I'm so good at bowing and scraping.
Then I explained what a Vice President does.

Actually, my trip to Japan was very touching.
It was a nostalgic experience,
Visiting our money.

I've been asked if development
Of the new FSX fighter with Japan might mean
The sharing of some Pentagon secrets.
Maybe -- but what do we care
If the Japanese suddenly start paying
\$600 dollars for a toilet seat.

Nevertheless, I do believe we are on our way
To a kinder, gentler nation.
Especially since Sam Donaldson left the White House.

You can't get a break from the media.
Bill Bennett announced he'd stopped smoking.
Next day, the papers called him a quitter.

Bill's taken on the tough job of figuring out
What to do about semi-automatic weapons.
We all know the NRA's position:
Guns don't kill people,
Grapes do.

And of course, if we outlaw grapes,
only outlaws will have grapes.

Still, this whole thing has been confusing.
I have a hard time picturing Southerners
Putting up a fruit pantry in the back window of their pick-ups.

Two grapes out of hundreds of thousands.
I want to meet those grape inspectors.
Get them working on this drug thing.
Or did they use grape-sniffing dogs.

Seriously, I am concerned about the
Crime situation in D.C.
I went aboard Marine One
And asked the pilot where to sit.
He said, "Over there, behind the tailgunner."

I went over to Mayor Barry's office
The other day to talk about it, but he wasn't there.
Apparently, the police tipped him off that I was coming.

By the way, someone ought to tell Mayor Barry that
The Superfund is not his entertainment account.

And that the Supercollider is not his limousine.

You'd think the White House would be safe from crime.
But last night Barbara was headed out the door to walk Millie,
Looked back, and said, "Cover me."

We were meeting in the Oval Office this week
To decide whether to call out the National Guard in D.C.
We had pretty much decided against it
When Dan Quayle stood up and said,
"Come on guys, for a lot of us Guardsmen,
This might be our only chance at combat pay."

Barbara's told me she's totally opposed
To the availability of assault weapons.
But I told her, "How am I going to take
Microphones and word processors away from reporters?"

One of the problems is defining
Exactly what a "semi-automatic" is.
I'm not so sure myself.
Heck, it sounds to me like
The editorial policy at the Washington Post.

I have to be careful here.
To be fair, when they're wrong,
The Washington Post does run corrections.
But I'm still waiting for the day when I see on Page 3,
Correction: "Nothing in last week's Style section was true."

Even my grandkids are starting to pick up
Bad habits from the media.
The other day, one of them asked for a candy bar
And I said "No".
Then she said, "I'd like to ask a follow-up."

Campaign-style politics has even come to Moscow.
You can tell they're a little rusty at campaigning.
I saw Boris Yeltsin on television last night:
Sitting in an 18-wheeler, pledging allegiance,
Wearing a policeman's cap and criticizing the pollution
in Odessa Harbor.

I called Yeltsin with a few pointers:
Don't forget to campaign at those coming-out parties
in Siberia.

People wonder whether Gorbachev
Is going to be able to remain in power.
So I called him and asked him.
He said, "Things aren't so bad.
At least I don't have Newt Gingrich after me."

The glasnost and perestroika in Russia today is amazing.
 They're openly discussing Stalin's crimes;
 Brezhnev's lavish lifestyle.
 Coming out next, I hear,
 Is a book called, "Lenin Was Lousy at Chess."

We kid about the Soviets. Sorry, Yuri [Dubinin].
 But the truth is, the novelty of the embryonic elections in
 Moscow this week is yet another reminder of how uncommon our
 traditions are.

You may recall Yakov Smirnoff's remark about how they have
 freedom of speech in the Soviet Union -- but with America, you
 have freedom after you speak. As he puts it: "It's a nice
 little feature."

Although humor isn't singled out in the First Amendment, as
 tonight's friendly competition shows, it's darn near a national
 imperative. Americans are supposed to take their
 responsibilities seriously -- but not themselves.

You've heard me declare it before: I'm not in Washington to
 question anyone's motives. I do not intend to let politics
 strain civility, credibility or friendship; it ought not deprive
 any of us of a good night's sleep, a partner on the playing
 fields, or ruin so much as a game of horseshoes. And when it
 does, there's no better antidote than a good laugh, preferably at
 one's own expense.

Mark Twain called laughter the "one really effective
 weapon," against which no humbug can stand. Amen.

Laughter is part of the magic of America, part of the magic of our politics and our press. A year from now -- heck, a week from now -- there'll be all sorts of new material. My misstatements alone should give you plenty to work with. And there'll be things yet unthought of, as unlikely as Rushdie's book or Millie's puppies. I wish you happy hunting. And I wish you laughter in your work.

Good night, and God bless you all.

#

(McNally/Simon)
3/31/89; 5 pm
(gridc1.bnd)

GRIDIRON DINNER
CAPITAL HILTON
SATURDAY, APRIL 1, 1989

Thank you, Larry [O'Roark, Gridiron Club President]
I must say I'm impressed.
This is the largest white tie group I've seen
Since those coming out parties in Iowa.

By the way, next year
Who do I see
About getting an earlier spot in the show?
((PAUSE)) Even the Academy Awards weren't this long.
((ASIDE)) Have we gotten to best picture yet?

Barbara's told me to ban assault weapons.
What should have been banned
were those last three skits.

Believe me, though, I know what it's like to
Follow a tough act.
Let's face it: If I was funnier than Ronald Reagan
I would have won in 1980 ((PAUSE))
And he'd be up here tonight
Trying to laugh away the BUSH deficit.

I guess the most important thing I've learned
Since becoming President
Is that you can't take criticism too seriously.

For example, people say I'm indecisive. ((PAUSE, THEN
HESITANTLY)) Well, I don't know about that.

2

People say I lack political courage.

Don't forget. ((FORCEFULLY))

I'm the one who went to the Amish
and told them to "Just -- say -- no."

People say that my agenda's confusing,
My staff's divided,
And you can't follow what's going on.
This from the guys on the McLaughlin Group?

But I know how to take a hit.
George Will predicted
That if I got elected,
The sound you'd hear from the Oval Office
Would be ((LOOK AROUND)) "the arf of a lap dog." ((PAUSE, THEN
INCREDULOUSLY))
And now Millie goes and proves him right.

But, I am glad that one of the puppies
Was a boy.
Now Congress will have to be more specific
When they refer to that
S. O. B. in the White House.

Watching you tonight brought back
A lot of campaign memories.
Campaign-style politics has even come to Moscow.
You can tell they're not used to campaigning.
I saw Boris Yeltsin on television the other night:
Sitting in an 18-wheeler; pledging allegiance; and
Criticizing the pollution in Odessa Harbor.

3

I had a feeling Yeltsin would win, though.
Once I found out his opponent, Brakov,
Had spent a lot of time riding around in a tank.

Actually, I think our administration
Has gotten off to a good start.
The trip to Japan was very touching.
It was a nostalgic experience,
Visiting our money.

You've got to have a good staff
to make the White House run.
Like Fred McClure up here.
Fred's worked for Ed Meese, John Tower,
And Frank Lorenzo. ((PAUSE))
I always consult Fred whenever I want to
Rub someone the wrong way.

And I was glad to see you appreciate
Lee Atwater's talents too.
Lee's a smart guy. ((PAUSE))
He's the first person in history
To go through Howard University
In just three days.

Have you seen Lee on stage?
Inauguration week.... The Letterman show.
The sunglasses.... The loud music.
The dancing and the sweat. ((PAUSE))
Now I know what Lee meant
When he said he wanted to lead the Party.

4

As Lee's often told me,
You can't get a break from the media.
Bill Bennett announced he'd stopped smoking.
Next day, the papers called him a quitter.

Even my grandkids are starting to pick up
Bad habits from the media.
The other day, one of them asked for a candy bar
And I said "No".
Then she said, "I'd like to ask a follow-up."

Bill's taken on the tough job of figuring out
What to do about semi-automatic weapons.
We all know the NRA's position:
Guns don't kill people, Grapes do.

And of course, if we outlaw grapes,
only outlaws will have grapes.

Seriously, I am concerned about the
Crime situation in D.C.
I went aboard Marine One
And asked the pilot where to sit.
He said, "Back there, behind the tailgunner."

((LAST JOKE:))

You'd think the White House would be safe from crime.
But last night Barbara was headed out the door
To walk Millie,
Looked back, and said, "Cover me."

We do a lot of kidding around in this town. But it's
important to be able to laugh.

5

Because even though humor isn't singled out in the First Amendment, as tonight's friendly competition shows, it's darn near a national imperative. Americans are supposed to take their responsibilities seriously -- but not themselves.

Mark Twain called laughter the "one really effective weapon," against which no humbug can stand. Amen.

Laughter is part of the magic of America, part of the magic of our politics and our press. A year from now -- heck, a week from now -- there'll be all sorts of new material. My misstatements alone should give you plenty to work with. And there'll be things yet unthought of, as unlikely as tainted grapes or Millie's puppies.

I wish you happy hunting. And I wish you laughter in your work. I promise to do my part -- Remember Pearl Harbor.

Good night, and God bless you all.

#

THE GRIDIRON DINNER
(UNLIKE OTHER DRAFTS, THESE ARE THE REALLY FUNNY JOKES)

The Grape Jokes:

✓ As a life member of the NRA, you know how I feel:
Guns don't kill. Grapes do.

✓ Besides, if we outlaw all the grapes, only the outlaws will
have grapes.

✓ And think of all the Southerners who'll have grape racks in
the back windows of their pick-up trucks.

✓ Isn't it amazing that the grape inspectors found just two
poisoned grapes out of hundreds of thousands of tons of them? I
think we should put the grape inspectors on drug detail, since
our drug agents are having such a hard time. We could give them
grape-sniffing dogs ... Arm them with assault grapes ...

✓ I see you didn't think that last joke was very funny. It's
alright. I bet Pete Rose you wouldn't laugh.

The Mayor Barry jokes:

✓ Somebody's got to tell Mayor Barry that Superfund isn't his
entertainment account. And that the "supercollider" isn't his
limosine.

✓ I think it's wonderful that the Mayor likes our minimum wage
proposal. And isn't it great that he qualifies for that training
wage?

✓ You know, I didn't realize how bad the crime in D.C. was
until the other day, when I got on board my helicopter, Marine
One. I asked the pilot where I should sit. He said, "Behind the
gunner, sir."

✓ Barbara went out to walk the dog one night last week.
Pretty dangerous, you might think. But it was okay. Before she
left, she said, "Cover me."

✓ I know there's been some talk around town about bringing in
the National Guard to deal with the crime problem in D.C. Well,
I can say with certainty that Dan Quayle says if called, he'll
serve. In fact, he's been ready to serve for the last 15 years.

✓ I believe that action is needed in dealing with this
problem. So I went last week to meet with Mayor Barry. But when
I got to his office, he was gone. Apparently, the police had
tipped him off that I was coming.

DOUG GAMBLE

March 23/89

424 - 38th Place
Manhattan Beach, CA 90266
(213) 546-6409

TO: CHRIS WINSTON

MATERIAL FOR PRESIDENT BUSH - 1989 GRIDIRON DINNER

IN MY INAUGURAL ADDRESS I SAID A NEW BREEZE IS BLOWING, AND I CERTAINLY EXPECT
TO BREAK SOME NEW WIND TONIGHT.

I HAVEN'T SEEN SO MANY PEOPLE DRESSED UP LIKE THIS SINCE THE LAST TIME JACK
KENT COOKE HELD A GARAGE SALE.

I TOLD LEE ATWATER I WANTED ONE OF THE PEOPLE MOST RESPONSIBLE FOR MY ELECTION
VICTORY TO SIT UP HERE AT THE HEAD TABLE. LEE SAID "DO YOU THINK WILLIE HORTON
HAS A TUX?"

AFTER WATCHING MEMBERS OF THE MEDIA TRYING TO ACT AND SING TONIGHT, I HAVE A
FEELING YOU MAY SOON BE JOINING SALMAN RUSHDIE IN HIDING.

THE ENTERTAINMENT YOU PROVIDED TONIGHT REALLY AROUSED SOMETHING UNEXPECTED IN ME.
I NEVER THOUGHT I'D FIND MYSELF FEELING NOSTALGIC FOR "THE GONG SHOW."

SERIOUSLY THOUGH, YOUR PERFORMANCES REALLY REGISTERED. (PAUSE) ON THE MISERY INDEX.

MORE...

- 2 -

TO: CHRIS WINSTON - GRIDIRON (CONT'D)

I WANT TO USE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO DENY THE RIDICULOUS ACCUSATIONS THAT WE'VE BEEN SLOW IN STAFFING THE ADMINISTRATION. ACTUALLY, I'D LIKE TO DENY IT IN A FORMAL STATEMENT, BUT WE HAVEN'T HIRED ANY SPEECHWRITERS YET.

JOHN SUNUNU ARRANGED OUR TRANSPORTATION TONIGHT, AND ON THE WAY OVER IN THE CAR I TOLD BARBARA I'D USE THIS EVENT TO EMPHASIZE THE FACT THAT THERE'S NO CONFUSION IN MY ADMINISTRATION. SHE SAID "THAT'S NICE, BUT THE GRIDIRON IS AT THE CAPITAL HILTON AND WE'RE HEADING OVER THE BRIDGE INTO VIRGINIA."

I'M CONFIDENT WE'RE GOING TO GET AMERICA'S FISCAL PROBLEMS UNDER CONTROL, AND IF YOU DON'T BELIEVE ME, JUST ASK MY NEW BUDGET CONSULTANT -- FRANK LORENZO.

AND I DENY THAT AMERICA IS A DECLINING COUNTRY. I HOPE TO VERIFY THIS PERSONALLY WHEN I START OUT NEXT WEEK ON A FACT-FINDING TOUR OF ALL 36 STATES.

I THOUGHT MY TRIP TO JAPAN WAS A BIG SUCCESS. THE JAPANESE WERE IMPRESSED BY THE FACT THAT I'M SO GOOD AT BOWING, AND I EXPLAINED I'D BEEN VICE PRESIDENT FOR 8 YEARS.

ACTUALLY, MY TRIP TO JAPAN WAS VERY TOUCHING. IT WAS A NOSTALGIC EXPERIENCE, VISITING OUR MONEY.

I'VE BEEN ASKED IF DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW FSX FIGHTER WITH JAPAN MIGHT MEAN THE SHARING OF SOME PENTAGON SECRETS. MAYBE, BUT WHAT DO WE CARE IF THE JAPANESE SUDDENLY START PAYING 600-DOLLARS FOR A TOILET SEAT?

MORE...

TO: CHRIS WINSTON - GRIDIRON (CONT'D)

SOME SAY MY FIRST TRIP ABROAD WAS OVERSHADOWED BY THE JOHN TOWER CO.
FOR THE RECORD, I DON'T THINK I MADE A MISTAKE BY REFUSING TO TWIST
THE VOTE. MY MISTAKE WAS IN NOT ASKING ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER TO TW

I'M GLAD WE CAN COUNT ON SENATOR BENTSEN'S SUPPORT FROM TIME TO TIME
BROUGHT THE SAME SUCCESS TO JOHN TOWER AS HE DID TO MIKE DUKAKIS.

I GUESS EVERYONE WAS THRILLED ABOUT OUR DOG MILLIE AND HER LITTER OF
I SHOULD POINT OUT THAT MILLIE HASN'T BEEN CONFIRMED YET AS OFFICIAL
HOUSE DOG, BUT SAM NUNN PROMISES QUICK CONSIDERATION. (PAUSE)
BUT FIRST HE WANTS THE NAME AND A BACKGROUND CHECK ON THE FATHER OF

I DON'T KNOW WHY MILLIE HAD TO GO GET PREGNANT IN THE FIRST PLACE.
MY AUTHORITY TO ORDER A 60-DAY COOLING OFF PERIOD WHEN I REALLY NEED

THERE'S DISAGREEMENT AT THE WHITE HOUSE OVER HOW EDUCATED WE WANT THE
BARBARA WANTS THEM HOUSEBROKEN ON "USA TODAY," BUT I PREFER "THE WALL
JOURNAL."

I WAS HOPING THE WORLD'S MOST POWERFUL EDITOR-IN-CHIEF MIGHT BE HERE
BUT APPARENTLY THE AYATOLLAH COULDN'T MAKE IT.

I HEAR SALMAN RUSHDIE FOUND AN INGENIOUS WAY TO LAY LOW AND MAKE SOME
ANY ATTENTION TO HIM. HE'S DISGUISED HIMSELF AS DAN QUAYLE.

MORE...

TO: CHRIS WINSTON - GRIDIRON (CONT'D)

THE IDEA OF A POWERFUL FIGURE PUTTING OUT A CONTRACT ON SOMEONE HE DISAGREES WITH IS INTOLERABLE. BUT I'M CONFIDENT THAT BRYANT GUMBEL WILL SOON WITHDRAW HIS CONTRACT ON WILLARD SCOTT.

BARBARA EMPHASIZED TO ME YESTERDAY THAT SHE'S TOTALLY OPPOSED TO THE AVAILABILITY OF ASSAULT WEAPONS. BUT I TOLD HER "I JUST CAN'T TAKE WORD PROCESSORS AND MICROPHONES AWAY FROM REPORTERS."

I'M SORRY I MISSED THE RADIO & TV CORRESPONDENTS DINNER A COUPLE OF WEEKS AGO, BUT MY MIND WAS ALREADY MADE UP. I WASN'T GOING TO ATTEND AN EVENT WHERE PEOPLE TELL JOKES AND HAVE A GOOD TIME, ON THE VERY ANNIVERSARY OF PEARL HARBOR DAY.

MY GRANDKIDS ARE LEARNING A LITTLE TOO MUCH FROM YOU FOLKS IN THE MEDIA. THE OTHER DAY, ONE OF THEM ASKED FOR PERMISSION TO CROSS THE STREET ALONE (or to stay up late) AND I SAID "NO." THEN HE SAID "I'D LIKE TO ASK A FOLLOW-UP."

I'M GLAD I FINALLY BROKE THE HABIT OF REFERRING TO MOST TV CORRESPONDENTS AS "DAN." ALTHOUGH, WHEN I WAS TALKING TO DAN BATHER THE OTHER NIGHT, I ACCIDENTALLY CALLED HIM "MR. CHUNG."

I WAS SO PROUD OF THE PEOPLE OF EL SALVADOR WHEN I SAW A TAPE OF THEM ON THE NEWS, DODGING BULLETS ON THEIR WAY INTO THE VOTING PLACE. THEN BARBARA SAID "WAIT, THOSE AREN'T SALVADORANS, THEY'RE U.S. CONGRESSMEN ON THEIR WAY TO WORK."

MORE...

TO: CHRIS WINSTON - GRIDIRON (CONT'D)

✱ WHEN BORIS YELTSIN WAS CAMPAIGNING FOR A PARLIAMENTARY SEAT IN THE SOVIET UNION, HE ASKED ME FOR ADVICE ON HOW TO WIN AN ELECTION. I TOLD HIM TO MENTION SOMETHING ABOUT DEBUTANTES AND COMING-OUT PARTIES IN SIBERIA.

✱ MAYBE YELTSIN HAS LEARNED SOMETHING FROM US AFTER ALL. I SAW A CLIP OF HIM ON THE SOVIET NEWS, AND HE WAS SITTING IN THE CAB OF AN 18-WHEELER, PLEDGING ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG, WEARING A POLICEMAN'S CAP AND CRITICIZING GORBACHEV FOR POLLUTION IN ODESSA HARBOR.

✱ SOMEONE ASKED ME IF I'LL SOON BE HAVING A SUMMIT MEETING TO HEAD OFF ANY PROSPECT OF OLD MISUNDERSTANDINGS AND HOSTILITIES FLARING UP AGAIN. YES, I HOPE TO MEET WITH ALAN GREENSPAN ANY DAY NOW.

CONGRATULATIONS TO NEWT GINGRICH FOR HIS ELECTION AS HOUSE MINORITY WHIP, DESPITE THE UNFAIR CHARGES THAT HE'S A SO-CALLED "BOMB THROWER." I PHONED HIM AT HOME TO WISH HIM WELL, BUT HE WAS BUSY IN THE GARAGE MAKING A MOLOTOV COCKTAIL.

I WANT TO ANNOUNCE TONIGHT THAT I'VE APPOINTED THREE OF MY SONS TO A SPECIAL COMMISSION. THEIR MANDATE IS TO ROOT OUT ANY TRACES OF NEPOTISM IN THIS ADMINISTRATION.

NOT ONLY AM I EXCITED ABOUT GEORGE W. BUSH'S ASSOCIATION WITH THE TEXAS RANGERS, BUT I LOVE THE GREAT AMERICAN PASTTIME EVEN WHEN IT'S PLAYED BY NEIGHBORHOOD KIDS. THERE'S NOTHING LIKE THE SOUND OF A JAPANESE BAT HITTING A KOREAN BALL INTO A TAIWANESE GLOVE.

MORE...

TO: CHRIS WINSTON - GRIDIRON (CONT'D)

I HAVE TO GIVE JESSE JACKSON A LOT OF CREDIT FOR HIS COMMITMENT TO THE DOWN-AND-OUT IN OUR SOCIETY. WHEREVER YOU FIND THE HOPELESS, THE DOWNTRODDEN AND THE DESTITUTE, YOU'LL FIND JESSE. IN FACT, I HEAR HE VISITED AN S&L JUST YESTERDAY.

BOB DOLE CALLED ME AND SAID "ELIZABETH AND I CERTAINLY HOPE THAT WASHINGTON'S POWER COUPLE ~~IS~~ IS GETTING AN INVITATION TO THE GRIDIRON." I TOLD HIM I'D PHONE THE MOSBACHERS AND ASK THEM.

I WISH THIS CONTROVERSY ABOUT HARMFUL APPLES WOULD BE CLEARED UP ONCE AND FOR ALL. AS I SAT DOWN TO DINNER LAST NIGHT, SIX SECRET SERVICEMEN WRESTLED MY WALDORF SALAD TO THE FLOOR.

I THINK I'VE COME UP WITH A KINDER, GENTLER WAY TO HUNT WILD ANIMALS. INSTEAD OF SHOOTING THEM, YOU THROW APPLES AND GRAPES AT THEM.

I WASN'T SURE IF I'D BE ANY GOOD TONIGHT. I JUST DIDN'T KNOW IF I'D BE IN THE MODE OF DOING THE HUMOR THING.

I CAN'T STAY ANY LONGER. MY OLD FRIEND JERRY FORD IS COMING OVER TOMORROW MORNING TO PLAY HORSESHOES, AND I'M GOING TO BE UP HALF THE NIGHT BOARDING UP THE WHITE HOUSE WINDOWS.

DURING THE CAMPAIGN I OFTEN REFERRED TO THE "L" WORD. HOW FORTUNATE WE ARE TONIGHT TO HAVE SHARED ONE OF THE GREATEST "L" WORDS OF ALL -- LAUGHTER.

Current movies:

✓ Barbara and I invited some friends over the other night to see a movie. It was the biography of John Sununu. You may have heard of it ... it's called "The Last Emperor." We liked it because it was a short subject.

✓ Have you heard about that new sequel to the movie "Rain Man"? It's about a senior White House official who travels across the country with a member of the press corps, talking on background the entire way. It's called "Dar-Man."

((Quayle - Accidental Tourist?))

Self-deprecating:

✓ People say I'm inarticulate and that I twist the language. Well, like, that's -- you know -- I just don't think that's, well I'm not inartic - no way. Hey, just get that outta here!

Others say I lack political courage. This is simply not true. I'm the one who went to those Amish people and told them to just say no ... I'm the one who went back to Yale to fight against illiteracy ... I'm the one who sent Manuel Lujan to American Samoa ...

The audience is the ^①
most important
part of the Gridiron

night of the
long butter
shines

(rounded, gentle
humor)

modesty is
the virtue
we admire most

in dark, to equalize
for POTUS the vision thing

VP in CALIF
at doll-collectors
convention
to replace the
one Jesse Helms
confiscated

if you believe
that, you'll believe
earth is getting warmer
Summer - global
warming "nothing
but hot air"

in 240. Stoughton
Mike in a
stake to 340
in a trunk

Chen,
Grouse here
one agrees
Pentagon, Murray
but of snows
"Left as for us
as we at 275"

Proud of Noriega (4)
handling:

lure to dark room
~~shuts off~~
block all exits
bombard w/ bad
music.

Hell - sounds
like the perfect
formula for
Girdiron

(Broder says
Girdiron like Noriega.
How can get Papal Nuncio)

(5)

Marine Corps
34th USMC

bring back news
in Korean

thought it was

receiving news

of how the USMC
actually handles
"Get the word out"

⑥

Water Choo play
Great Winifred
(Ann Margaret)
face on HT's body
Dobie Noodle
in and. (Babe)

Water Choo. - RR
money. (O me
thing he won't forget
- HT)

① Jerry O'Keefe (st.s.)
BB "1989 imp.
"great."
"Wash's premium
Kroger's Groceries"

Alan Crumley, D.D.
G.H. - Attorney
also with
Pop. about

Newark, Newark
County, New Jersey
Chas Brown
of Newark, Pa.
copy of LAX

⑧

Jack Germany
as Roger Ailes
— death penalty
for flag burners

2 tank jokes
(Colin Powell)

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